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AZON  
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Government  
Publications

178

No. 13



N° 13

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**  
Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**  
Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

# **Official Report of Debates (Hansard)**

# **Journal des débats (Hansard)**

**Wednesday 9 May 2001**

**Mercredi 9 mai 2001**

**Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr**

**Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr**

**Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers**

**Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers**



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Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 9 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 9 mai 2001

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### NURSING WEEK

**Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** On Monday of this week I had the opportunity to participate in the kickoff of Nursing Week in my riding, organized by Ruth Pollock and Ruth Pigeon. I was pleased to be able to participate, to highlight the hard work and dedication of the nurses in my riding and across Canada.

My daughter happens to be one of those nurses, and I have watched how the workload has increased due to drastic cuts to the health care system. It is time the Harris government realized what the nurses are going through and tried to eliminate some of these problems.

Cuts in the health care system have created shortages not only in nursing but also in hospital beds, emergency room services and waits for surgery. In my riding there are patients who have to wait for crucial MRIs, health care, and I could go on.

But one of the most important issues is the fight for kidney dialysis. Over the years, I have spoken many times in this House to the lack of dialysis in my riding. Our bid to get dialysis up and running was successful, but there are still 17 patients who have to travel to Brockville, Kingston and Ottawa for this life-saving health care.

Coincidentally, the government has the money and the resources to provide the additional funds. It's time that the Ministry of Health, the stakeholders and the health care workers solve this important situation so that these dialysis patients can be treated closer to home.

#### LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** This morning, once again, New Democrats stood side by side, shoulder to shoulder, arm in arm with working women and men here in Ontario. On behalf of the NDP caucus at Queen's Park and New Democrats across Ontario, I joined members of CEP Local 593, representing some 600 workers here in Ontario, with another 300 across the country. These people work for Petro-Canada.

Petro-Canada has forced these workers to strike to obtain some modest level of fairness in pension benefits. Petro-Canada—hugely profitable; indeed showing almost

a 2000% increase in profits in the first quarter of this year—denies these workers their fair share in terms of pension benefits.

Petro-Canada as well has been particularly cruel, to the point of firing the daughter of one of these striking workers, who had already been granted a contract as a co-op student, being that Petro-Canada is part of her work placement.

You see, it's not enough just to talk about working families; you've got to stand with them. You've got to stand with them on the picket lines when they're fighting for economic and social justice.

As well, New Democrats wholeheartedly support the call of these CEP Local 539 workers for a boycott of Petro-Canada fuels and products. The fact is, Petro-Canada gasoline is scab gasoline. Nobody in this province should be putting scab gasoline in their cars, trucks or SUVs. We shouldn't be buying scab gasoline. Say no to Petro-Canada. Stop buying Petro-Canada gas.

#### EVENTS IN CAMBRIDGE

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** Saturday, May 5, was a special day in my riding of Cambridge. The Cambridge Centre for the Arts held its eagerly anticipated grand opening, with potters, poets, musicians, dancers, artists and writers from across the community energizing the day-long celebration. For Cambridge Arts Guild members Sara Dailley, Devon Henderson, Roger Howell, Helen Fowler, Robert Kastner, Pat Rideout-Rosenberg, Diana Watson, Graham Scott and Dr. Tom Samolcyzk, this was a dream come true. After three years of hard work, this community initiative, spearheaded by the chair, Jill Summerhayes, has become a reality.

The Cambridge Arts Guild raised \$500,000 through corporate and private donations toward the renovation of this Cambridge landmark, a former PUC building opened by Sir Adam Beck in 1922. Both the provincial and federal governments worked with the city of Cambridge, led by my good friend and former mayor Jane Brewer, and private partners such as Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada and others, to renovate this impressive \$2.5-million facility.

Cambridge families will now have access to this 19,000-square-foot centre, comprised of studios, workshops, classrooms and meeting space. It is truly a great addition to the fabric of our community and will be enjoyed by many.

Thank you to everyone involved in this very important community project on behalf of Cambridge families.

## TAXATION

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** The ideologically driven Harris government has shown it is not capable of managing the affairs of this province. Working families who pay taxes expect their dollars to go toward protecting the water they drink and the air they breathe. They expect their valuable tax dollars to be put toward investment in primary, secondary and post-secondary education. They expect quality health care.

We on this side of the House understand that these services must be provided in an effective manner and with good fiscal management. We know that today the government is going to reduce corporate tax to be 25% less than US jurisdictions. We are already highly competitive with the US, and more importantly, it makes bad economic sense, particularly in an economic downturn. This unnecessary tax cut will cost us \$2.4 billion a year in lost revenue.

What is absolutely absurd is that community care services in Sarnia-Lambton are so strapped for money that home care providers have been asked to take five to 10 minutes from patient care to cut costs for travel time between patients. Why do we have money for unnecessary tax cuts when we are nickel-and-diming essential services in this province?

## WASTE REDUCTION

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Across the province of Ontario there are many positive examples of what can be achieved when we all work together. My riding of Durham is but one fine example.

I'm proud to announce that on April 19 the municipality of Clarington received its second straight silver medal for the Ontario Waste Minimization Award, given out to municipalities by the Recycling Council of Ontario. On hand to accept the award on behalf of the municipality of Clarington were public works director Stephen Vokes, as well as Sue Arends and Fred Horvath. For 2000, the merits used to determine the winners in each of the different categories—platinum, gold, silver and bronze—were overall present practices as well as waste management policies over the last three years.

The silver award was given to just seven municipalities that generated between 151 and 215 kilograms per capita, a 30% residential waste reduction from the estimated provincial average. I should also mention that Durham region was awarded a bronze for a 20% reduction.

I've said in the House before that young people in Durham also have a strong interest in the environment. Today a group of students from Courtice Secondary School of the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board begins competition at a province-wide event called the Envirothon, which will wrap up on May 12. Under the direction of teacher John Howden, Courtice students Lucie Mussakowski, Carl Pokorski, Ashling Amato, Virginia Ervin and Jay Hutton will compete against other

students across the province on environmental trivia as well as the presentation components on this issue.

I am proud of the accomplishments not just of the students, but of all of my riding of Durham. We feel very strongly about protecting our environment.

1340

## MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGER

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):** It's been a year since the long and successful fight to keep the Henderson hospital open on Hamilton Mountain, the only acute care hospital on the mountain. Over 250,000 Hamilton residents are served by this hospital, and it is the host hospital to the cancer centre, a world-renowned cancer centre.

It's been two years since the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care made initial approval for an MRI at the hospital. The hospital is waiting for final approval before calling for tenders for the building which will store the MRI.

The MRI is waiting in Germany to be shipped to Hamilton. The Henderson cannot accept delivery before it receives final government approval for the MRI building. The delay from the government means it could be 2002 before the new state-of-the-art diagnostic unit begins to scan patients. The MRI unit may even be stored in Winnipeg, at great storage costs, if approval doesn't come soon.

Hamilton Health Sciences Corp has raised \$2.5 million to pay for the system, and all documentation has been forwarded to the ministry since July.

The current waiting list for the MRI in my community is six months. Imagine waiting for six months before knowing your diagnosis. The new system will drop the wait to two months.

The Henderson MRI will serve patients from across south-central and western Ontario. It will make the now challenging recruitment of doctors easier.

I've called the minister's office, I've sent a letter and have not received a response—surprise, surprise. I have one question: why the delay? Do the right thing. You promised. Sign the papers. People's lives are at stake.

## ITER FUSION PROJECT

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I rise in the House today to urge the federal government to support Ontario's bid for the international ITER fusion project.

Fusion, the process of joining atoms to release energy, is fuelled by tritium, the waste produced by OPG nuclear operations. Fusion is a sustainable energy source which produces minimal amounts of radioactive waste and no greenhouse gases.

However, the federal government has not yet submitted Canada's proposal. Let's hope that somewhere in the federal government's recently announced \$750 million for research and development, they can find money to support this project. The benefits are indeed enormous:

1,000 to 1,500 construction jobs; \$6 billion in capital costs to build in Ontario; 300 scientists; 400 support staff; another \$6 billion required for operations. At its peak, total jobs created: 3,500, with an increase to Ontario's GDP of \$5.2 billion.

We have the existing site infrastructure in Clarington. There will be no transportation of tritium required. We are an internationally neutral site and we have favourable socio-economic conditions.

We are confident that Canada can win the bid to host the international ITER fusion energy project here in Ontario, and we urge the federal government to submit Canada's proposal now.

#### ORDRE DE LA PLÉIADE

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell) :** À titre de président de la section ontarienne de l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie et au nom de mes collègues de l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario, il me fait un grand plaisir de souhaiter la bienvenue à huit des 10 personnes, ici présentes dans la tribune du Président, qui recevront l'Ordre de la Pléiade ce soir.

Les personnes qui seront décorées sont l'honorable René Marin, M. Paul Chauvin, le D<sup>r</sup> Jérôme Corbeil, M<sup>me</sup> Ethel Côté, M<sup>me</sup> Tréva Legault-Cousineau, M. Caroll Jacques, M. Gilles-Mathias Pagé, l'honorable Chris Stockwell, et M<sup>e</sup> Pierre Gravelle et M. Pierre de Blois, qui seront aussi honorés ce soir mais qui sont absents pour le moment.

La Pléiade est l'Ordre de la Francophonie et du dialogue des cultures de l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie. Depuis la fondation de la section ontarienne en 1988, 19 personnages ont été honorés, dont nos anciens premiers ministres David Peterson et Bob Rae, l'ancien procureur général Roy McMurtry, ainsi que Claudette Boyer, députée d'Ottawa-Vanier.

Tous les récipiendaires de cette prestigieuse médaille ont su nous démontrer l'importance de préserver notre langue, de jouir de notre héritage culturel et de vivre avec fierté dans une si belle province qui déborde de richesses culturelles.

J'invite mes collègues de l'Assemblée législative à se joindre à moi pour accueillir chaleureusement nos invités d'honneur qui sont parmi nous. I invite my colleagues in the Legislature to join me in welcoming our special guests who are with us today.

Bon séjour à Queen's Park.

#### THORNHILL RATTLERS

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill) :** Tonight the attention of hundreds of thousands of Ontarians will be on New Jersey, where the Toronto Maple Leafs play game seven against the New Jersey Devils, and on Philadelphia, where the Toronto Raptors play game two against the Philadelphia 76ers.

Residents in Thornhill, however, are following an extra team: the Thornhill Rattlers. The Rattlers are

representing the central region of Canada in competition for the Royal Bank Cup, Canada's national Junior A hockey championship. They face stiff competition in the Camrose Kodiaks, the Weyburn Red Wings, les Panthères de St-Jérôme, and the host Flin Flon Bombers.

The teams started round-robin play on May 5 and continue to May 10. The top four teams will advance to semi-final play on May 12, with the gold medal game to be held on May 13 and televised nationally. This evening, the Rattlers will look for their first win of the tournament against host team Flin Flon Bombers.

Tonight, while you cheer for Mats Sundin, for Vince Carter, and for Curtis Joseph, make sure you take some time to think about people like Jason Chrapala, the Rattlers' goalie. When you marvel at professional coaches like Pat Quinn and Lenny Wilkens, think about Frank Carnevale, the Rattlers' coach and general manager. Coach Carnevale and the rest of his staff vowed to last year's Rattlers team that they would have a chance to play for the national championship.

On behalf of Thornhill residents, I wish the Rattlers the best of luck in Manitoba.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr) :** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the third report of the standing committee on government agencies.

Pursuant to standing order 106(e), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### CREUTZFELDT-JAKOB DISEASE

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care) :** I beg to inform the House that yesterday afternoon a neurosurgeon at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital in Windsor received a blood test indicating that a patient who had surgery in the hospital in March of this year may be suffering from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. The hospital immediately contacted the local medical officer of health and Health Canada to ascertain the appropriate procedures.

The House should know that reports indicate that the disease occurs worldwide, with an incidence of one case per million people each year. The disease can only be contracted in three general ways: first, sporadic CJD, where there is no evidence of the disease in prior or subsequent generations of a patient's family; second, inherited CJD, which accounts for approximately 5% to

15% of the cases; and third, through infection. Although CJD is caused by a transmissible agent, the disease is not considered by experts to be contagious in the traditional sense.

At the present time, Health Canada advises that the only proven manner for contracting CJD from an infected person has been through the unintended consequence of a medical procedure using tainted human matter or surgical instruments. While Hotel-Dieu Grace employs the latest Health Canada approved methods for sterilization, as an extra precaution, the hospital decided to suspend surgery temporarily so that OR instrumentation can undergo a special cleaning and disinfection. While there is only a theoretical possibility that any other surgery patient may have been infected, neurosurgeons from the hospital are contacting all patients who had surgery in that hospital since March.

I am pleased that the appropriate agencies were contacted immediately when the hospital became aware of the situation and that there has been close co-operation between all affected agencies since that time. Hospital staff were informed of all measures they should take at staff meetings this morning. I've also been assured by infectious disease experts that there is also no reason for members of the public to be concerned for their personal health. We will, however, be monitoring the situation very closely.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the professional health workers of Windsor for their rapid reaction and response to this situation.

1350

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to respond on behalf of our caucus and our community, especially our health professionals in Windsor who are dealing with a situation that is most unfortunate at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital. Thankfully, under the good leadership of our CEO of that hospital, Mr Frank Bagatto, they have taken all the necessary requirements and precautions under Health Canada guidelines, under the direction of the public health unit, the director of Ontario for the public health unit, and all those who have all the information, to tell the people of Windsor that they know how they are to handle this situation.

It's very imperative that the citizenry of Windsor understand that the precautions that have been taken go beyond what is required under Health Canada guidelines. In the cancellation of surgery, in the specialized next step of sanitizing tools for the operating room, all of those items are things that go beyond what is required. We're pleased to see the kind of leadership our CEO and the hospital professionals have taken and intend to take.

I'm especially pleased to hear that the Ministry of Health will continue to monitor on a very regular and very frequent basis all the requirements that are happening so that all of us will in fact be safe. It's unfortunate that we deal with these things from time to time, and it's especially important to see the professional and swift manner in which we're able to deal with this.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** I know I join with all members in the House when I express heartfelt sympathy for the individual and the family of the individual who may be suffering from this tragic disease. I would also like, on behalf of our caucus, to indicate our appreciation to Mr Frank Bagatto and the staff of Hotel-Dieu Grace, who in consultation with the medical officer of health and Health Canada have taken swift and decisive action to ensure all available precautions are being taken.

The member for Windsor West has shared with me over the course of the last couple of hours her detailed discussions with the CEO of the hospital, and I want to indicate that I certainly share with her a strong faith in his leadership and his leadership team.

I will indicate that the hospital intends to hold a press conference at 2:30 in which many of the details that have been shared here and further details will be shared with the people of Windsor. I understand the concern the member for Windsor West has raised that it is important to get good solid information in people's hands and that there is an agreed-upon sense of confidence by the members of this Legislature Assembly in the leadership that has been shown at the hospital and the medical health unit and Health Canada. We will await further information from the minister as he monitors this.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### PRIVATE HOSPITALS

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** My question is for the Premier. A week or more ago, a leading doctor in my community advanced a notion because we have had such issues around our hospital care, because we know of the number of beds we've lost, the two emergency rooms that were closed, the surgeries that go waiting time and time again. There are individuals like Mr Mousaly who we've spoken about in this House, delayed from a basic knee surgery and therefore now on the welfare system because we can't get our people to access care in a timely and quality fashion. This leading doctor advanced to our local media the notion of taking Grace hospital, soon to be closed, and turning it into a private hospital.

Premier, this is the headline in my Windsor Star for that same story: about privatizing the hospital so Americans can access our system. I'd like the Premier in the House to stand today and refuse to allow a private company to come in and take over our hospital.

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think the Minister of Health can respond.

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'm aware of the headlines and the issue the honourable member has raised. I can only say that on this side of the House we're concentrating our full time and attention on providing accessible, sustainable, excel-

lent health care through public funds for Ontarians who are residents in Ontario.

I really don't have much to say about the proposal; I don't know any of the details of it. I can only say that certainly from our perspective we're concentrating on publicly funded, sustainable health care. We invested \$22.5 billion of taxpayers' money last year, up from \$17.4 billion in 1995. Perhaps the honourable member knows the statistics as well as I do now: health care spending has increased 27% over the last five years and 19% in the last two years alone. That is our focus. That is where the time and attention of the ministry is focused right now.

**Mrs Pupatello:** My question was to the Premier of this province. It's in fact the Premier's statements that I'm referring to.

Premier, it was you who advanced the notion in the media in the Toronto area that you would entertain the notion of private hospitals in Ontario. On the heels of your comments, a leading doctor in my community is suggesting taking one of our closed hospitals and turning it into a private facility that caters to Americans, so that Americans can fly in to the helipad for access to care that in fact Windsor residents do not get in a timely fashion.

Premier, this is your responsibility and these are your remarks on this road you are taking us on. I'd like you to stand in the House today and say you will not allow a private company to come in and run our hospitals.

**Hon Mr Clement:** Again, there is certainly no proposal before this ministry or this government. All our focus is on treating Ontarians, making sure Ontarians have quality, accessible health care when they need it for medically necessary services. That is why we have invested \$22.5 billion last year, and why that investment was 27% higher than when we first got elected. That is what we are focusing on. We're not focusing on Americans or on giving health care to Americans. Our focus and our concern and what we spend 24 hours a day, seven days a week worrying about is the best health care for Ontarians. Perhaps the honourable member can help us in that regard.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Premier, let me ask you this question again. It was your comments on Focus Ontario that started us down this road, that everyone has been responding to. It was your comments about privatizing hospitals that have set off alarm bells for Windsor residents who cannot access care today, after supposed investments in the hospital system, when in fact you closed thousands of beds, laid off thousands of nurses and are now attempting to get those nurses back—they still cannot find full-time jobs in the Ontario hospital system.

Mr Premier, I am asking you once again to stand in this House today and say you will not allow private hospitals to come into Ontario, you will not allow private companies to take over our existing hospitals. These are the kinds of headlines that have Windsorites alarmed. We don't access quality care as it is today. Despite the flurry of announcements your health minister chooses to make, our quality is not getting better. It's gotten worse in the

six years you've been Premier of this province. I'm asking you again, please say no to companies running hospitals.

**Hon Mr Clement:** Again, there's nothing to respond to because there's no proposal before us. Our focus is on Ontarians and their health care. If the honourable member wants to be helpful, then she can advise her leader not to play politics on a serious issue, and to work with us to ensure the future sustainability of our health care system. To do otherwise is to bury his head in the sand. It's a shameful exercise. Every leader has to be part of the solution.

If the honourable member doesn't want to take my word for it, she can take the word of the honourable member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot when he was quoted in the local press saying, "I don't know why everybody gets hot to trot about this, other than to score cheap political points. I think all options should be looked at." That's the recently elected honourable member saying that. That's what a member of her caucus said when asked about the need to look at all the solutions to maintain the sustainability of our health care system. So perhaps the honourable member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot has a bit more of an open mind about it than his caucus colleague—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

**Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just want to say that once again I'm being quoted out of context.

**The Speaker:** It's not a point of order.

1400

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** Maybe I can find a question the Premier would like to answer. Premier, let's not wave papers around. If we're going to wave any around, it's going to be an application form for the northern heritage fund. I want to talk about your friends, the ones who managed to siphon hundreds of thousands of dollars from the northern heritage fund because they decided to set up a shell company in order to call themselves not-for-profit, because the rules said that for-profit companies could not access money from the northern heritage fund.

Not only did these friends of yours get hundreds of thousands of dollars, but your friend's son, who works at the fund, decided to sit down, spread out the paperwork and help them create this shell company to get around the rules.

My leader asked you this question this week in the House. Could you please tell us today, after you've had some time to think about it, how you rationalize to the public your friends taking money to run a golf tournament?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think the Minister of Northern Development and Mines can respond.

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** The mandate of the northern Ontario heritage fund is to promote economic development and diversification of industry in northern Ontario. The issue the member opposite raises, with respect to an application she's referring to, was subjected to the normal, due-diligence processes. In fact, I have a letter from my deputy, Cam Clark, which says, "The application met the NOHFC tourism program's eligibility criteria and guidelines." Further, "The projects met the key objectives of attracting tourists to northern Ontario and marketing northern Ontario through national and international television and newspaper coverage."

**Mrs Pupatello:** Premier, we haven't been sitting in the House for four months. Now that you're back, we actually want you to answer a question. Let's try this again.

Another one of the clauses on the application form that this company is supposed to be required to answer is that in order to be eligible for any funding, the funding "must be necessary to make the project viable." Are you trying to suggest today that your friends, who set up a shell company in order to get around the rules to access hundreds of thousands of dollars from the northern heritage fund to run a golf tournament, were not able to do that because without that money they couldn't make the necessary project viable, when a Sudbury businessman, whose name is Sam Yawney, applied for the same money to run the same tournament with the same golfers in the north and wasn't able to access any money from the northern heritage fund?

Premier, welcome back. Could you please tell us how you rationalize hundreds of thousands of dollars for a golf tournament?

**Hon Mr Newman:** For the third time in this House, I want to clearly state that no application was brought forward by Mr Yawney—none. Every day you ask the question, and the answer remains the same: there was no application. The tournaments were not the same.

In fact, on January 22 of this year, Dalton McGuinty did receive a letter from Jim McClure, the secretary of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp, in which he said, "As you may be aware, the NOHFC supported the 1999 tournament," which was in Sault Ste Marie, which no one seems to have a problem with, "with a similar contribution. As well, the NOHFC is expected to receive an application for similar funding to support the 2001 tournament, which is scheduled to be held in Thunder Bay. Northern Ontario and the host cities are showcased through the presence of national and international professional and amateur participants, as well as the national media coverage generated by the tournament."

**Mrs Pupatello:** Mr Premier, this final question is for you. Have your media advisers in the Premier's office, which has doubled since you've sat there, whose budget has doubled since you became the Premier, told you not to answer questions about your friends getting money from the northern heritage fund?

This final question is for the Premier. I ask the Premier directly, why is it that your friends can access hundreds of thousands of dollars from the northern heritage fund, and every other company was told not to bother to apply because they didn't qualify? But the Premier's friends were helped to start a shell company to get around the rules in order to get hundreds of thousands of dollars for a golf tournament in your part of this province.

Premier, I ask you again. Welcome back to this House. We insist on an answer on how the Premier's friends benefit by hundreds of thousands of dollars.

**Hon Mr Newman:** The question the member opposite has raised has been answered by the Premier in this House this week and it has been answered by me. I'll answer it again. But let's talk about what the Liberals did when they were in office.

**Mrs Pupatello:** No, let's talk about hundreds of thousands of dollars going to friends.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order.

**Hon Mr Newman:** Let's talk about what the Liberals did when they were in office. In 1994, the Haileybury country club received \$140,000 for an upgrade of the golf course and clubhouse. That was the Liberal—

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Newman:** Also there has been money that's gone to the New Liskeard golf course in the early 1990s.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Answer the question.

**Hon Mr Newman:** We've answered the questions. There was no application that was brought forward—

**Mrs Pupatello:** Chicken. Why won't you answer, you big chicken?

**The Speaker:** Minister, take a seat. The member for Windsor West, this is her last warning.

Minister.

**Hon Mr Newman:** Clearly we've answered the question. There was no application brought forward. No application was rejected because no application was brought forward.

## WATER QUALITY

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** My question is to the Premier. We just learned from the Walkerton inquiry that in 1997, after you privatized all the water testing labs, your Minister of Health wrote to the Minister of the Environment of the time urging him to require those private testing labs to immediately notify the medical officer of health of negative test results. If your government had acted on that suggestion, fewer people would have gotten sick in Walkerton and lives might have been saved. But you ignored it.

Premier, I want to ask you, why did you ignore and not act on that critical proposal?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think the Minister of Health can respond.

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** Environment.

As the member opposite well knows, we now have some very key requirements in our drinking water regulations and, as a result, any adverse results are reported immediately to the local medical officer of health, the Ministry of the Environment, and the owner.

**Ms Churley:** Premier, I would appreciate an answer from you on this supplementary.

There is legislation before this House, Bill 3, the Safe Drinking Water Act, which, contrary to misinformed statements by your environment minister, requires that notice be given to all users if there is unsafe water. It requires that a summary of all test results be sent directly to water users right at their homes with their water bill. It requires that all test results be posted on an electronic water registry. As well, it provides for a permanent, dedicated safe drinking water fund, which your government took away.

Premier, can you explain to us why your government is opposed to those measures?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** At the present time, we in the province of Ontario have the toughest water regulations and standards anywhere in Canada. We have the most comprehensive regulatory framework. It sets out some very clear steps on treatment and testing. It also indicates what must be done to protect the public when the water does not meet acceptable standards. As we move forward, we would hope that all other provinces in Canada would adopt similar standards and a similar framework.

**Ms Churley:** Minister, you're missing the point here. What we're calling for, and what the people of Ontario, environmentalists and experts, are calling for is a law, not more regulations and guidelines.

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The Canadian Environmental Law Association, a non-partisan group of widely respected environmental experts—and the new environment minister shouldn't laugh, like previous ministers, when those names are mentioned—said that your new water regulation does not displace the need for special drinking water legislation in Ontario. They say your regulations don't go far enough, aren't good enough and won't save lives, and don't create a clear statutory right to clean and safe drinking water. They have called upon your government and the Liberals to give fast passage to this act.

Tell me, Minister, given all this criticism of your regulations by experts and the growing concern about the safety of our water and the growing calls for a bill, a law, if you don't pass mine, why will you not bring in a safe drinking water act to protect the lives of the people of Ontario when they turn on their taps?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** We have already brought in a drinking water protection regulation. Again I would emphasize that we now have the toughest standards anywhere. We have the most comprehensive regulatory framework.

If the member wishes to speak about experts, there are many experts at the present time who have indicated that other provinces should take similar steps to what has happened in Ontario.

We will continue to review our standards. We will continue to review our framework. We will continue to ensure that we have the toughest standards in Canada.

#### HOUSING POLICY

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Yesterday you rolled out the latest boondoggle from the development industry. You've gutted rent control for them, you've stopped social housing and you cut their taxes, but they say it's still not enough. They want more. They want more, even though the most they will ever build are units renting for \$1,400 a month.

Minister, why are you so intent on throwing even more money at developers even if tenants and taxpayers suffer?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I'm not sure I heard the whole question, but I did hear a reference to the announcement yesterday where I accepted the Housing Supply Working Group's recommendations.

This group was formed in September of last year to look at why there are not enough rental units being built across Ontario and across Canada. They looked historically, that Canadian cities were building as many rental units as comparable cities across North America in the 1960s and early 1970s, and yet in the 1990s we were falling far short of that. So they looked at what changed, and their report outlines some barriers. I'm pleased to say our government has removed a lot of the barriers at the provincial level, but there's still a lot of work to be done at the federal level, around taxation and capital gains, and at the municipal level, and we're taking steps to address that.

**Mr Marchese:** Minister, all I can tell you is that this boondoggle to the developers has got to stop.

Your policy has been a total failure. In the eyes of everyone in the field of housing, it's been a complete failure. The units are not being built, yet you've added more than \$5 billion to the value of landlords' investments. Who has paid for that? The tenants. In Toronto they're paying \$2,000 more a year.

Minister, why don't you admit that your housing policy has been a total boondoggle and a total failure?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I think most people, anybody who looks at this objectively, would say the only boondoggle that's taken place was under the NDP government, when even the auditor talked about \$1 billion of the taxpayers' money being squandered.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** My question is to the Premier. I want to ask about a matter of tremendous importance to the working families of children and adults with mental and intellectual disabilities in this province.

Recently, members of the Alliance of Associations Serving Children and Youth publicly told you that the developmental services and children's mental health sectors are facing a severe crisis. These organizations came together in an unprecedented fashion from all across Ontario to tell you that without increased funding support, their agencies face a complete breakdown in their ability to recruit and retain the needed staff to work with our most vulnerable citizens.

Your government's woefully inadequate response to this crisis, which is literally the result of 10 years of frozen support to this vital sector, was to announce a one-time funding increase last year that amounted to less than a 1% increase in remuneration for the dedicated but seriously undervalued workers at these agencies.

Premier, my question is this: do you recognize in any way how serious this problem is, and will you go beyond your government's usual rhetoric and commit to providing the needed funding to keep Ontario's developmental services and children's mental health sectors from collapsing?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think the Minister of Community and Social Services can respond.

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** Providing supports for people with developmental disabilities and the tremendously committed folks who work with them each and every day has been a real priority for this government. In 1999, we provided an additional \$35 million to that sector. Last year, we provided in the budget an extra \$50 million to support that sector.

We strongly believe that we have a strong responsibility to provide for the most vulnerable in our society. We can do that in a whole host of ways: helping families through respite care, providing funds to the agencies that provide this great service to people and doing a whole host of things to improve the lives of these folks in our communities, our fellow citizens with developmental disabilities.

**Mr Gravelle:** Premier, we need you to respond to this. Minister, you're just not dealing with the actual crisis. The human infrastructure is crumbling and the wrecking ball is your government's apathy toward this critical problem. Staff turnover at these agencies is threatening to impact the care received by our loved ones, which includes my own brother, Mark, who is a resident at a home run by the Lakehead Association for Community Living. All of us as family members are very, very concerned.

The reality is that agencies simply do not have the resources to pay their staff the adequate wages. The fact is, the sector is falling further and further behind while the 71,000 staff employed in these agencies from all across Ontario are becoming increasingly disillusioned.

Premier, your lack of commitment to providing proper support to all these agencies may have dire consequences down the line. You've got to take this seriously. Will you at least begin the process of addressing this serious issue by committing to a multi-year action strategy to address

the horrible inequities that plague the system? Will you give us something in today's budget? Will you give the Alliance of Associations Serving Children and Youth some semblance of hope that you understand and will act on behalf of those they serve? We need your help in this. It's a true crisis.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Over last fall, we conducted a review particularly of the developmental disabilities sector in the province of Ontario. We went out and asked agencies right across the province for their best advice, for their opinions, for their suggestions on how we could improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities. We got a terrific amount of input. You bet we'll be there to ensure that we provide some good supports for people with developmental disabilities. We've done it in recent years and we'll continue to do so. If you ask the sector, if you ask the Ontario Association for Community Living, if you ask their families if they are satisfied with the efforts of this government in recent years, they'll say yes. They'll say yes this afternoon and they'll say yes this evening.

#### ONTARIO STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** My question is directed to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Ontario student loans make post-secondary education accessible for thousands of Ontario students. But as the Provincial Auditor has pointed out, our government inherited a system with a high default rate, a rate of some 23.5%, almost 25%. In other words, one in four students had defaulted or was defaulting.

I support the auditor's concern, as this was unfair to hard-working taxpayers, it was unfair to students who paid off their loans, it was unfair to governments in the past that supported graduate negative behaviour, and it was unfair to educational institutions. Minister, what is the current rate of default on Ontario student loans and what steps have you taken to address this situation?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** I'd like to thank the member for Northumberland for his continuing interest in our students. I'd just say that the government is committed to making sure that every qualified and able and willing student will have a place in our post-secondary institutions.

Student assistance and student loans are extremely important to the accessibility of these young people. This is the time to give them some credit, because in fact over the last three years our default rates across all post-secondary where our students attend—I'm talking about our colleges, our universities and our private vocational schools—has decreased. They're at about a 15.7% default rate, down 2.5% last year alone and almost 8% over three years. So we're moving in the right direction, and our government is tremendously committed to helping these young students better manage the costs of their post-secondary education.

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**Mr Galt:** Certainly low default rates are good for everyone: students, institutions and taxpayers. But while the default rate has declined substantially, our government should be as committed as ever to ensuring that students are able to afford the cost of taking out student loans. Minister, we've heard about increasing tuition fees, and we've heard about the increasing costs of inflation. What measures are responsible for the decline in default rates, and what options will you pursue to help students better manage the costs of post-secondary education?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** This has been a priority for the government, to work with students. Of course they are advising us every step of the way. We have enhanced our Ontario student opportunity grants to limit the amount of debt students can accumulate during their studies and provided a tax credit to reduce interest costs. We've increased the number of opportunities for student aid outside of OSAP through initiatives such as our Aiming for the Top scholarships. Over 4,000 students received these scholarships from our secondary schools last year. There is the Ontario student opportunity trust fund, a shared fund between the private sector and our universities. Over \$600 million was raised to help our students at every institution. Our Ontario Works study program—this is an opportunity for some 3,500 to 7,000 students—has doubled the funding from \$5.4 million to \$10.8 million. This helps students earn money while they're at our colleges and universities. Everyone in the House knows about the loan harmonization legislation, our work with the federal government, because we want to work together on behalf of our students. We're doing much more together to help our students in our post-secondary—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The city of Hamilton, as you're aware, is now going through its budget process. There is a shortfall caused by your government of \$27 million in transitional funding that you owe the good people of the city of Hamilton.

You met with Mayor Wade in March. You promised in March that you would have an answer and that you would consider their request for additional funding for Hamilton. As of today, Minister, you have not responded to the city; you have not come through with one cent. The budget process is almost completed. The city is in a serious financial crisis as a result of what you have imposed upon them—not the mismanagement, not the mishandling, but the shortfall of \$27 million.

You came through with funding for Toronto to deal with their budget problem and their transition costs. Why are you treating the citizens of Hamilton as second-class citizens? Why have you held us hanging since March?

Will you stand up today and tell us that you will send a cheque for \$27 million that you owe to the city of Hamilton?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I'm glad to answer the member's question. First of all, his premise is totally false. We were asked to be a partner in finding the savings that will accrue, year after year, to the residents of Hamilton. That's for all the people of Hamilton. We've agreed to 100% financing, where 50% is in grants and 50% is in loans. Recognizing that all the savings that will accrue throughout the years to the residents and ratepayers of Hamilton cannot be achieved upfront and immediately, we've given a loan of 50% and a 50% grant. That's 100% financing.

**Mr Agostino:** Hopefully the minister will soon get briefed by his staff and catch up on what's happening in his ministry now, because it is outright wrong, Minister. You are wrong. You owe the city of Hamilton \$27 million this year for transitional funding. Any way you spin it, that is the bottom line.

As a result of your mismanagement, you're going to end up with 5% to 10% tax increases, you're going to end up with user fees, you're going to end up with cuts in services, you're going to have basic services cut to the most vulnerable people in our community. You met with the mayor in March. You committed you would look at the proposal. You have done absolutely nothing since you met with Mayor Wade in March. You didn't tell him that you've covered it off. You said you would look at their request.

Minister, again, you've committed to Mayor Wade that you would look at their request for \$27 million. Again, today, why are you shafting the people of Hamilton, and will you come through with the \$27 million that you've shortchanged us in transitional funding?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I see the member hasn't lost his usual grace and charm and, as usual, he's as accurate on the facts on this issue as he is on others. There was no commitment made to the mayor in terms of restructuring. They realize they got a fair deal. They would like to have 100% in grant, but unfortunately it's the formula where 50% is in loans and 50% is a grant. The residents of Hamilton received the savings. The answer was no then and it's no now.

The issue that Mayor Wade brought up for the residents of Hamilton was around some of the unfunded liability in one of the amalgamated townships of Flamborough. I've also taken the liberty of meeting with your member who represents that area, quite ably, I might add. He has given me some advice on that and we're still examining the ramifications of it.

So, as usual, you're wrong on your facts and you've spun it out in your usual graceful and charming way.

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** My question today is for the Minister of Northern Develop-

ment and Mines. I want to say how delighted the people of my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka are to be included in the boundaries of northern Ontario. We are now able to take advantage of many programs and services that were once out of reach. The provincial Liberals have been very unclear in their position on whether or not they support this initiative. The Leader of the Opposition says yes; the member for Sudbury says no. Frankly, I'm not sure who speaks for the Liberals or how they feel about this initiative. Perhaps you could outline for the opposition some of the rationale behind making Parry Sound-Muskoka part of the north.

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** I'd like to thank the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka for the excellent question. As part of our government's commitment to the north, the Mike Harris government provided one clear definition of the north. In the past, various government programs had used different definitions of "northern Ontario." Some included Muskoka; some stopped at Parry Sound. We have eliminated the confusion that has surrounded which programs northern Ontario residents may access. The expansion of northern Ontario has benefited Muskoka as well as the rest of the north. The inclusion of Muskoka gives the north a larger population and a greater voice in Ontario. By clearly defining the northern boundary and now including Muskoka, we have made things fair. Now permanent Muskoka residents have access to all northern-focused funding and not a smattering of programs chosen at random.

**Mr Miller:** Thank you for that answer, Minister. Clarifying the boundaries does make it much simpler to understand. In fact, I believe the federal government in August of last year agreed with the Mike Harris government's clear definition of boundaries and adopted them. Apparently the provincial and federal Liberals can't agree. Perhaps you could outline some of the programs many of my constituents are now able to take advantage of.

**Hon Mr Newman:** I'd be happy to answer that question. The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka is correct. The federal Liberals did adopt our boundaries. When the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane was asked, he declared that the federal decision was nuts and that the area was already rich in resources. The member is correct again when he says the only thing more confusing than the northern boundaries under the Liberal government is the Liberal position on whether or not they support clear northern boundaries.

But I say to the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka, in answer to your question, some of the many programs that will help stimulate regional economic development and social well-being are the northern Ontario heritage fund, which has been increased from \$30 million per year to \$60 million per year and to date has created some 10,000 jobs in the north, the violence-against-women prevention initiatives, as well as the health recruitment tour travel subsidy and the extended grants for family physicians and specialists.

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## TUITION FEES

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, 77% of the people polled in a 1999 Angus Reid poll agree that money, lack of financial support and cost of tuition are the factors most likely to keep someone from continuing their education beyond high school. A University of Guelph study found that over a 10-year period, relatively more students from higher-educated, affluent families chose admission to Guelph than those from lower-educated and low-income brackets. The cost of attendance appears to influence the choice of institution in which such students eventually register.

Minister, as you defend your current policies, don't you believe, as I do, that government should be conducting research to prove costs are not a barrier to accessing a post-secondary education?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** I think every member in this House should be proud of what we accomplish here in this great province, and that is that no student has been or will be denied access to our post-secondary institutions because of financial circumstances. We have made this a priority, and I hope the member will assist us in getting this message out to our young people. We have made it a priority. We have capped our tuition fees so that parents have a plan. They know they're capped at 2% for the next five years. That's part of the plan.

We have put money into our colleges and universities by asking them to set aside 30% of the tuition fee increases, estimated to be \$125 million this year alone, to help young people who may not get what they feel is enough support from OSAP; they can go into these other funds. We have set up the kinds of supports in our universities and colleges so that no student should be in our colleges and universities who cannot afford to be there.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The minister's time is up.

**Mr Marchese:** Minister, I know you're quite proud of your policies; I understand that and I'm not defending them. I'm telling you that the study done in 1999 shows you've got a problem with 77% of the public, and the study they did in Guelph clearly shows accessibility to post-secondary education is the problem.

The study by Ipsos-Reid that was released yesterday says that two thirds of Ontarians, 64%, including a majority of decided PC voters, 53%, want increased provincial funding for universities and colleges, even if it may mean cancelling tax cuts. Seventy per cent of parents are concerned their kids won't be able to attend university or college, even if they are qualified. The main reason? They can't afford it, 79%; including decided PC voters, 78%. They have concerns. What you're saying to

this 70% to 80% of the people is, "Don't worry. Marchese, help me to communicate that it's not a problem." They are concerned, and I'm telling you, if you believe your policies are correct, to do the study so you can say to the public, "It's not a problem." Do a study. That's what I'm asking you to do. Can you do that?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** There are numbers of studies that come our way. Right across the country, Ministers of Education are looking at them all the time. We're looking for the best advice we can get.

But, you know, right here in Ontario the best advice we get is from the students themselves. We have an advisory committee. They have asked us to set up certain funds, and we've worked together over the last five years to do just that. We have set aside the Ontario student opportunity trust fund—the private sector and the public sector, \$600 million; 185,000 students will be supported over the next 10 years.

Aiming for the Top last September—call your high schools, every single one of you; get the message out. We have Aiming for the Top scholarships to help students who get marks and who have financial needs—last year alone, 4,000 students. We have grants to limit the maximum annual debt incurred by students to \$7,000. If they get the millennium scholarship, it's limited to \$6,500.

Students are our priority. We want them to reach their hopes and dreams.

#### FIREFIGHTING

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** My question is for the Solicitor General. Firefighters in western Ontario are having difficulty providing the same excellent level of emergency services during fire calls since the restructuring of Hydro in Ontario. I've heard from several fire officials so far that since the creation of Hydro One, firefighters must wait up to one and a half hours to get a call back from Hydro One to determine if downed wires are dangerous or to get the service to a residence cut to protect the people.

Clearly, this is not a good and acceptable situation. It seems you haven't talked to the Minister of Energy regarding the changes he's making in implementation of our emergency service personnel.

Minister, can I have your commitment today that you will immediately investigate this situation and ask the Minister of Energy to improve the service so that they can do their jobs safely and effectively, as firefighters, while protecting all hard-working families and citizens of Ontario?

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** I'll refer this to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology.

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** I thank the honourable member for bringing the situation to my attention. I take the matter he has raised quite seriously, and I'd be happy to report back to him once I've had an opportunity to look into the situation.

**Mr Levac:** Thank you for that answer. Solicitor General, maybe I can ask for a second commitment. The same firefighters have mentioned that during the fire investigations it often takes the Electrical Safety Authority days to respond to an investigation of a fire in order to determine the source of that fire, whether it was electrical or not. I'm told, again, that investigators on the scene, which took mere hours before, now takes days. I'm sure the staff of the Electrical Safety Authority are doing the best they can. However, this delay can result in the cause of a fire not being determined as arson or anything else, and thus even cause a delay in the possibility of a police investigation.

My supplementary is very simple. When is your government going to make these changes, so that our firefighters can do their job, and make sure we talk to both ministries to do their job for the people of Ontario?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Again, I thank the honourable member for bringing the situation to my attention. The Electrical Safety Authority is a self-governing body and, on behalf of the government, of the member and of all members here, I will certainly encourage them to improve the situation if it is as you describe. I have no doubt that you're bringing a factual case forward. I will endeavour to talk to that self-governing body and make sure they respond appropriately to these serious situations.

#### TOURISM

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** My question is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. As the nice weather is upon us, the minds of many Ontarians are turning to thoughts of vacations, especially the traditional family road trip. There are several tourist attractions in my riding, particularly in the Rice Lake, Belmont Lake, Chemung Lake, Clear Lake and Stony Lake areas, gearing up for the summer tourist season. They're hoping to capitalize on the traffic from families on vacation and to lure these travellers into their sites for a visit. But not every small tourist operator has the budget for an elaborate advertising campaign to let vacationers know about their particular operation. What are you doing to help tourist operations get more travellers through their doors?

**Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation):** I thank the member for Peterborough for his question and appreciate his ongoing interest in supporting job growth in rural Ontario and in tourism.

In addition to our tourism marketing partnership, an investment in partnership with the private sector, we also have a new signage system in the province, which I want to boast about a bit today, called the tourism-oriented directional signage program, or TODS for short. These are the beautiful blue signs on our highways and byways across the province that help tourists find attractions and accommodations, to help them find their destination more quickly and safely and, as well, to try to pull travellers off the highway into unplanned trips and to

spend money in our communities. Certainly, everyone would agree that this is a major improvement on the pre-Mike Harris signage, which was inconsistent, difficult to follow and totally funded by the taxpayer. This new system is clear, consistent, user-friendly and totally funded by the private sector. Not a dollar of taxpayer money funds this program—a major triumph for tourism.

**Mr Stewart:** I was remiss in not mentioning the Otonabee River and the complete Trent-Severn system that runs through my riding.

It is good news for taxpayers that they don't have to pay for the overhaul of the tourism signage system. I've heard positive feedback on the new system from tourists and businesses in my riding. But tourist operators in my riding want to be sure the system is actually working, that it's bringing more business through the door. What evidence do you have that this new system is meeting that goal?

**Hon Mr Hudak:** That's an excellent question, and I'm pleased to respond to the member for Peterborough. The TODS signage program has signed up 80% of capacity. Originally a 10-year commitment already, after three years, 80% of the destinations have been signed.

In a recent survey of motoring tourists, we found that 92% agreed that TODS helped them find their tourism destination; 71% said TODS influenced decisions en route regarding places to stop, hopefully additional places; 92% agreed the information was easy to understand. So the system is working. Whether they're trying to find a place in the Kawartha Lakes or find their way down to the Haida, this helps tourists get to places and spend money in our communities.

Additionally, to make sure that we continue to improve the program, I've asked my hard-working parliamentary assistant, the lovely and talented member for London-Fanshawe, Frank Mazzilli, to work to make improvements to the system, to make it the best system in all of North America.

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### CHILD CARE

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. I have been travelling across Ontario following a tour with the Coalition for Better Child Care. In community after community, I've heard stories from parents who are struggling to balance work and family life. Government members have chosen not to attend these forums and I think it is important that you are aware of an issue that has been repeated many times.

Families have told me that criteria from your government require families to liquidate their savings before they can qualify for a child care subsidy. In one case, a family whose grandparents set aside money each year on the child's birthday in a registered education savings plan was told they had to cash this gift before they would be able to access a child care subsidy which

they needed. Families who are trying to be responsible, who are investing in RRSPs and RESPs for their children's education, must cash them before they have access to a child care subsidy.

Minister, will you change this regressive policy that punishes families that are trying to invest in the future and well-being of their children?

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** We recognize that for many working families in Ontario child care is an important resource that helps parents balance the pressures of raising a family and of being able to maintain gainful employment. We recognize that's a significant challenge. That's why this government has increased support to both parents and their children in this area, not just with the substantial amount of money, more than \$500 million, to be spent more directly on child care supports, but through the \$200-million Ontario child care supplement for working families. We do have a needs-based child care subsidy program in the province of Ontario. Unfortunately, taxpayers are not able to subsidize those who have other financial means.

The member opposite cited one example of a registered retirement savings plan. I can tell the member opposite I would be uncomfortable asking those who can't afford to make contributions to an RRSP to subsidize those who can.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** Minister, I want to tell you about a woman in my riding who wrote me a letter: "Last year I had a healthy baby boy. Unfortunately, I don't make that much money, so I needed a subsidy to send my child to daycare." This woman had \$6,000 that had taken her seven years to save, but because of your policy she was told that she had to cash her savings before she would be considered for a child care space she could afford.

Ontario families are forced to choose between affordable child care now or saving for their children's education later. Seventy-nine per cent of families fear that they will not be able to afford their children's education. My constituent asked, "Why does the federal government encourage parents to save money for their children's education when the provincial government penalizes you for it?" These are hard-working families, families struggling to get ahead.

Minister, will you amend your child care subsidy policy so that working families are not penalized for planning for their children's future?

**Hon Mr Baird:** I'll address the issue that the member raises directly. She talked about our policy. In fact, this policy with respect to assets has been in place since 1983. It wasn't changed under the Davis government; it wasn't changed under the Peterson government; it wasn't changed under the Rae government; it wasn't changed under the Harris government.

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):** You weren't alive back then.

**Hon Mr Baird:** To the member for Hamilton Mountain, I was.

The member opposite says that parents would be forced to cash it in. I'm very happy to direct the member that if a parent cashes it in, they're still not eligible.

What I can't do as Minister of Community and Social Services and what we can't do as a government is ask those who can't afford to make a contribution to a registered retirement savings plan to subsidize the child care of someone who can.

### LIVING LEGACY

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton):** I have a question for the Minister of Natural Resources. Ontario's Living Legacy has recently celebrated its second anniversary. I know that Ontario's Living Legacy made possible the protection of 378 new parks and protected areas, the largest such increase in history. What made Ontario's Living Legacy possible was a previous agreement, the Ontario Forest Accord.

The Ontario Forest Accord brought together, for the first time ever, representatives from the forestry industry, the environment community and the provincial government to protect natural areas and to protect wood supply and jobs to industry.

Minister, can you tell us about the Ontario Forest Accord and about the recent report back you received on the accord?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources):** I thank the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton for the excellent question. In fact, the Ontario Forest Accord is a revolutionary agreement between three parties: the provincial government, as the member mentioned; the Partnership for Public Lands; and our forest industry. They work together on the Ontario Forest Accord Advisory Board to help us make sure that we stay true to the original agreement.

I think the best way to describe the actions of the board is in the board's own words. They said, "Prior to the signing of the accord in March 1999, such an agreement was almost unthinkable. Our normal mode of communication during these times was confrontation and arguing with each other. The accord struck a careful balance among competing interests. It moved away from the win-lose attitude of the combatants in the so-called 'war in the woods.' It not only called a truce for the moment, it promised a new way of working together from this time forward."

**Mr Tascona:** I know Ontarians are thankful for your good work with respect to the environment.

Now that Ontario's Living Legacy is a reality, I understand that it also has grown from its original mandate and now is a province-wide program. Minister, can you give us some details on how the Living Legacy has expanded?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Certainly, I'd be pleased to. In the member's own area, the Lake Simcoe environmental management strategy has been put together and is receiving some \$75,000 to help do an integrated approach to protecting the environment, including fisheries, natural heritage features, recreation, tourism and the local and

regional economies. So it's working right in the member's own riding.

This provides us with greater protection for species at risk, greater participation for youth in Living Legacy, more protection enhancement for fish and wildlife and their natural habitats, and of course the acquisition of more natural areas for their protection; this, on top of regulating and protecting those 378 new parks and protected areas.

We're hard at work, busy making Ontario a better place for future generations.

### NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT SUPPLEMENT

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a question for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, can you guarantee that none of the 844 million federal dollars that you will receive from the national children's agenda will be used to subsidize or to replace any provincial money which is now being used to support children's services?

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** We have worked very closely with the federal government on a series of initiatives to try to improve the lives of young children. Improving the early years of children from zero to six is a tremendous priority.

I can tell the member opposite that we presented a budget in estimates last year and all of the new funding for 2001-02 will of course be new funding. One of the commitments was to establish a baseline of supports. I can say that in Ontario we were an early leader in providing supports to young children.

The new national children's agenda, money coming from the federal government as a result of the efforts of the Premier in encouraging the federal government to come to the table with additional resources, was a tremendous victory. We're pleased to have the federal Liberal government joining our effort for this, what will be the third phase of our children's agenda.

**Ms Martel:** Minister, if I understood you correctly, you are guaranteeing that none of the federal money will be used to subsidize or to replace provincial dollars now supporting children's services.

You see, Minister, you are the government that takes the federal money for children and claws it back from those on social assistance in this province. You don't add one new dollar to support the poorest families in the province. What we want to guarantee is that you will not do the same thing again, that you will not take this federal money and subsidize or replace provincial dollars that are already supporting programs. We want to be sure that all of the \$844 million will be used to support new, important services for children.

So I ask again, Minister, can you guarantee that not one penny of the \$844 million will be used to either sub-

sidize or replace provincial money now supporting children's services in Ontario?

1450

**Hon Mr Baird:** It will all be new money; of course it will be new money.

The member opposite talked about the adjustment made with respect to the national child benefit supplement. I am very pleased to provide the member opposite with some information. She may be unaware that that national child benefit supplement reinvestment strategy is going on in her own community, in Sudbury, in spending an additional million dollars in 1999-2000 to help the send-a-kid-to-camp program, to pre-kindergarten schools and to support for teen parent housing, right in her own community of Sudbury. We're providing the Ontario child care supplement for working families, which has been an absolutely essential part of doing something for those real heroes in our society: the working families who aren't on welfare and who are living and working on low and modest incomes, the real heroes who are getting up and making less than \$29,000 a year.

I'll sum it up with a quote from the federal member Ovid Jackson, the MP for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who said, "I am encouraged by the efforts that have been made by all levels of government to ensure that all residents of Ontario receive the best care, the best education," and the best health care. "The national child benefit was developed to fight child poverty and to help low-income Canadian families move from welfare to work," and it's been an outstanding success.

#### NORTHERN EDUCATION SERVICES

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I have a question for the minister of universities and colleges. As the minister would know, the small, particularly northern, colleges in this province have had severe funding problems over the last few years. As she would also know, this has resulted in the closure of satellite campuses in the Elliot Lake and Wawa area of Sault College, and now we've become aware that Collège Boréal will be closing their campus in Elliot Lake.

Could the minister assure me and my constituents that funding formulas for the small northern community colleges will take into account the need to reach out into northern Ontario's smaller communities and provide access for my constituents and other constituents, so they may maintain campuses in rural areas?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** The colleges and some universities that are smaller and in rural, remote communities do have challenges. One of the positions of former governments and our government has been that there is some consideration in the grant regs to support the small and remote colleges. Perhaps that is something that could be looked at in the future.

In other instances there are special considerations with regard to working with many of the satellite colleges. My

colleagues in central and southwestern Ontario have difficulty with their colleges being able to support satellite colleges. Where they have been successful, there has been tremendous support from local municipalities. So I think it is a matter of partnerships—municipal partnerships, private sector partnerships—to encourage these small, remote campuses. In most parts of Ontario where there has been success, there has been this kind of a partnership.

#### PETITIONS

##### LORD'S PRAYER

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** I am pleased to present a petition this afternoon signed by approximately 50 of my constituents from the Golden Friendship Club in Pembroke. I want to thank particularly Mrs Marianne Swan of RR3, Cobden, who has submitted this petition on behalf of this seniors' group in the Pembroke area. The petition basically expresses a very real and serious concern about the removal of the Lord's Prayer from various meetings and from school exercises across the province. This group of 50 seniors expresses very serious concern and regret about this removal.

I'm pleased to present this petition on their behalf to the assembly this afternoon.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has cut funding for regulated child care spaces in Ontario by 15% between 1995 and 1998;

"Whereas the Conservative government under Mike Harris has yet to implement the recommendations of its own commission's Early Years report by Dr Fraser Mustard to create a seamless, integrated early years education system;

"Whereas the Conservative government will receive \$844 million over the next five years from the federal government for early years development projects;

"Whereas the Conservative government lags behind other provinces in announcing its plans for the \$844 million in federal money for early years development; and

"Whereas other provinces are implementing innovative, affordable and accessible child care programs, such as Quebec's \$5-a-day child care program;

"Whereas the need for affordable, accessible, regulated child care and family resource centres continues to grow in Ontario;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Harris government immediately match and earmark a significant portion of the \$844 million from the federal government for expanded regulated child care spaces and family resource programs."

This is signed by 39 people from Toronto. I agree with them and I've affixed my signature to it.

#### HORSE RIDING SAFETY

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas an increasing number of Ontarians are turning to horseback riding as a recreational activity; and

"Whereas many of these inexperienced riders are children; and

"Whereas currently there are no minimum safety standards regulating riding establishments; and

"Whereas coroners' inquests into horse riding fatalities from as long ago as 1977 have called for the mandatory use of riding helmets and boots; and

"Whereas an unacceptable number of preventable injuries and fatalities have occurred while horseback riding;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to pass into law the private member's bill introduced by Tina Molinari, MPP for Thornhill, entitled the Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001, in order to increase the safety of horse riders under the age of 18 by requiring the operators of riding establishments to ensure that proper safety equipment is used, and to amend the Highway Traffic Act and make it an offence for any rider under the age of 18 to ride a horse on a highway without the proper safety equipment."

I support this petition. These petitions are coming in daily. I affix my signature.

#### AUTISM SERVICES

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the citizens of Ontario, feel that the government is violating the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms by discriminating against autistic spectrum disordered children in the delivery of necessary health care. This is a petition to offer the intensive behaviour treatment required to all autistic spectrum disordered children, not only to those most severely afflicted, and abolish waiting lists for essential health care to these children....

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To offer the intensive behaviour treatment required to all autistic spectrum disordered children, not only to those most severely afflicted, and abolish waiting lists for essential health care to these children."

I agree with this petition and I affix my signature to it.

#### SAFE DRINKING WATER LEGISLATION

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the people of Ontario have the right to receive clean and safe drinking water; and

"Whereas clean, safe drinking water is a basic human entitlement and essential for the protection of public health; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario have the right to receive accurate and immediate information about the quality of water; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and the government of Ontario have failed to protect the quality of drinking water in Ontario; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and the government of Ontario have failed to provide the necessary financial resources to the Ministry of the Environment; and

"Whereas the policies of Mike Harris and the government of Ontario have endangered the environment and the health of the citizens of Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) Immediately restore adequate funding and staffing to the Ministry of the Environment;

"(2) Immediately pass into law Bill 96," now Bill 3, "the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2000."

I agree with this petition and will affix my signature to it.

1500

#### SEWAGE SLUDGE

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** It is so seldom I get to speak.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas residents of the Durham riding have raised concerns over the spreading and storage of sewage sludge and other biosolids; and

"Whereas Bill 149 has been introduced by Durham MPP, John O'Toole, to regulate the spreading and storage of sewage sludge and biosolids, including paper sludge;

"Whereas Bill 149 would require that no person shall spread sewage sludge or other biosolids without a certificate of approval or a provisional certificate of approval from the director;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 149 to amend the Environmental Protection Act and add the relevant sections regarding the spreading and storage of sewage sludge."

I'm pleased to sign and endorse this very important initiative.

#### SALE OF SCHOOLS

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** This is to the Parliament of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Hughes Public School at 17 Innes Ave in the city of Toronto closed down and its premises have been declared surplus by the Toronto District School Board;

"Whereas the city of Toronto has issued a building permit to the Toronto District School Board permitting the reconstruction of Hughes Public School for an entity called Beatrice House, for the purpose of a private academic school;

"Whereas local taxpayers' concerns have been ignored by the Toronto District School Board;

"Whereas other locations, such as the Brother Edmund Rice School or the Earlscourt Public School, which are being closed down, have been offered to Beatrice House to no avail;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Honourable Minister of Education investigate the leasing arrangement between the Toronto District School Board and Beatrice House inasmuch as:

"(1) Boards are to seek fair market value when selling, leasing or otherwise disposing of schools, except that the price for the property not to exceed the value of the ministry's grant for the public pupil places; and

"(2) Boards are to offer the property to coterminous boards and other public agencies; and

"(3) The Toronto District School Board has not dealt in good faith with our neighbourhood residents;

"Therefore, we respectfully ask you to consider our plea for justice. The Toronto District School Board has ignored our concerns and due diligence. We as a community tried everything within our power to fight the glaring and obvious wrong done to us, but to no avail."

I'm glad to sign this petition as well.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** Petitions from so many concerned citizens.

"Whereas the annual rent increase guideline for multi-unit residential dwellings in Ontario increases every year more than the rate of inflation and more than the cost-of-living increase for most tenants;

"Whereas no new affordable rental housing is being built by the private sector, despite the promise that the implementation of vacancy decontrol in June of 1998 would encourage new construction;

"Whereas over 100,000 people are on the waiting list for social housing, homelessness has increased as a result of unaffordable rents, and high rents are a direct cause of the national housing crisis;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement an immediate province-wide freeze on rents"—the New Democrats proposed—"which will stop all guideline increases, above-guideline increases and increases to maximum rent for all sitting tenants in Ontario for a period of at least two years."

I would ask Mark to send it to the clerks because I support this petition very strongly.

#### PROTECTION DES MINEURS

**M. Bob Wood (London-Ouest):** I have a petition signed by 639 people.

« Étant donné que des enfants sont exposés à des biens et services sexuellement explicites dans un grand nombre d'établissements commerciaux ;

« Étant donné qu'un grand nombre de municipalités n'ont aucun arrêté municipal visant à protéger les mineurs contre les biens et services sexuellement explicites, et que, pour les municipalités ayant de tels arrêtés municipaux, on n'y trouve aucune uniformité, et que ces municipalités n'ont pas réussi à protéger les mineurs contre les biens et services sexuellement explicites ;

« Étant donné que l'Ontario devrait avoir une seule loi au niveau provincial visant à protéger les mineurs contre les biens et services sexuellement explicites,

« Nous, les soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario d'adopter le projet de loi 95 visant à protéger les mineurs contre les biens et services sexuellement explicites dans le plus bref délai. »

#### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** C'était excellent, la dernière pétition qui a été rapportée.

J'ai ici une pétition soussignée par beaucoup de gens du nord de l'Ontario qui se lit comme suit :

"Whereas the report of the McKendry commission, released by the Ontario Ministry of Health in December 1999, finds that Ontario is facing a shortage of over 1,000 physicians; and

"Whereas at least 286 international medical graduates in Ontario have successfully completed the Medical Council of Canada evaluating exam, demonstrating competence in clinical knowledge; and

"Whereas the number of Ministry of Health funded post-graduate positions in 'pool B' (that is, international medical graduates) has been reduced from 289 to 81 since 1994; and

"Whereas the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine has indicated that they have the capacity to absorb an increase in the number of entry-level post-graduate positions, as long as sufficient resources are provided to support the increase; and

"Whereas the Legislative Assembly of Ontario unanimously passed private member's resolution 6 on November 25, 1999, which held that the government of Ontario should implement a plan to improve access to professions and trades for foreign-trained professionals,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care as follows:

"(a) to restore the number of Ministry of Health funded post-graduate positions for international medical graduates to at least 1994 levels;

"(b) to increase immediately the number of entry-level post-graduate training positions to the full capacity of the Ontario faculties of medicine;

“(c) to make the increased entry-level post-graduate positions directly available to international medical graduates who have successfully completed the requisite examinations;

“(d) to develop a plan to identify alternative funding mechanisms that allow more equitable access for international physicians to the health care system in Ontario; and

“(e) to appoint a committee, with representation from the international medical graduate community, to review and dismantle the barriers which have been established to prevent international physicians from gaining fair access to licensure and practice in Ontario.”

I sign the petition.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 320 people.

“Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

“Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

“Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible.”

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the northern health travel grant was introduced in 1987 in recognition of the fact that northern Ontario residents are often forced to receive treatment outside their own communities because of the lack of available services; and

“Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged that the costs associated with that travel should not be fully borne by those residents and, therefore, that financial support should be provided by the Ontario government through the travel grant program; and

“Whereas travel, accommodation and other costs have escalated sharply since the program was first put in place, particularly in the area of air travel; and

“Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre have all their expenses paid while receiving treatment in the north which creates a double standard for health care delivery in the province; and

“Whereas northern Ontario residents should not receive a different level of health care nor be discriminated against because of their geographical locations;

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness and inadequacy of the northern health travel grant program and commit to a review of the program with a goal of providing 100% funding of the travel costs for residents needing care outside their communities until such time as that care is available in our communities.”

I'm in full support and have affixed my signature hereto.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In accordance with the House rules, I'd like to rise in my place and correct, for the record, a statement I made yesterday in the House. During question period I indicated there was about \$800,000 in new and expanded programs for persons with disabilities. In fact, that number is \$800 million of new and expanded programs by our government.

I appreciate the opportunity to correct the record.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I thank the minister for correcting the record.

1510

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I seek unanimous consent of the House that we now suspend proceedings until 4 o'clock, at which time the budget will be presented

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed?

**Interjection:** No.

**The Speaker:** Just so you know, if there is not unanimous consent, the Minister of Finance does not need to read the speech in here. The government also does not need to call the motion for debate until the end of the session and there could be no debate on the budget.

Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard a no.

Orders of the day.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I would like a short, five-minute recess to prepare the minister and the staff for debate of other government legislation, if I may.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We're into orders of the day. It's for the government to call an order or for the House to adjourn until tomorrow.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Under the unusual circumstances, I would like to confer for a moment, if I could.

Government House leader?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Mr Speaker, we would like to call G19, resuming debate on the motion for second reading

of Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act.

## ONTARIO STUDENT LOAN HARMONIZATION ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 SUR L'HARMONISATION DES PRÊTS D'ÉTUDES DE L'ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 7, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 19, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act / Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre):** I rise today in support of this legislation. It helps the students access financial assistance to attend college or university. Ensuring there is space and financial support for every willing and qualified Ontario student is important to the government. Since taking office, we have taken several concrete steps to ensure accessible and sustainable public post-secondary education in our province.

The member from Trinity-Spadina spoke yesterday about the double cohort. I'm pleased to address some of those concerns. For anybody watching who is not familiar with this term, "double cohort" refers to the unusually large number of students who will be entering studies in 2003 as a result of the elimination of grade 13 in Ontario.

The member from Trinity-Spadina seemed to be unaware of the government's significant investments to address the issue, although I understand that for partisan reasons he may not want to draw too much attention to them. I should point out that because of the record growth Ontario is experiencing, the government is not only concerned with the double cohort years but is anticipating growth in enrolment over the next decade.

I admit that, had the Liberals or the NDP stayed in power, they would likely never have had to face the problem of rapid growth in colleges and universities. But the province's strong economy and high standard of living have meant a growing population, and managing that growth and ensuring sustainability over the long term is a priority of this government. I'm pleased to provide factual information on our government's work to address the growing number of students in this province.

This government has addressed the challenge of growing enrolments by making the largest investment in post-secondary education in more than 30 years. Over \$1 billion has been invested to ensure the sustainability and capacity of public colleges and universities in our province. When you add the contributions from institutions and private donors to this initiative, the total value of investments in space for new students is \$1.8 billion and will make new room for 73,000 students in public colleges and universities in every region of Ontario.

As other members have pointed out, 59 construction projects are moving ahead at campuses across our

province due to this historic investment. The construction cranes rising over every campus in every region of this province are the best rebuttal against the groundless charges from the opposition, particularly the NDP, that nothing is being done to plan for future growth.

But being Conservatives, we understand how intelligently you spend is as important as how much you spend. Taxpayers' dollars should be spent efficiently and effectively. We have clearly done that, and in this case particularly.

Funds were awarded through a competition and were evaluated based on four criteria: (1) How many spaces for new students can you create if you receive funding? (2) How much financial support from other sources do you have for this project? (3) How strong is the demand for the programs you will offer if this project receives public funds? (4) What is this project's contribution to the long-term economic strength of the community?

This is not how previous governments did business, but thankfully we had an accountable process and we were able to find the best projects that would make the most efficient use of taxpayers' dollars.

With regard to facilities renewal, the government is taking concrete steps to ensure that existing buildings are maintained and kept up to date so students can enjoy the highest quality of education. Last year we made an additional \$95-million investment for modernization and renewal that will allow colleges and universities to upgrade their existing facilities. This was a 35% increase in funding over the previous year and the single largest investment in the facilities renewal program since this initiative began in 1986.

To ensure that plans for the double cohort are co-ordinated and well-managed, the government is working with Ontario's post-secondary institutions to prepare for the effects of this increased demand. The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities has been working with a group of ministry, university and college representatives through the Working Group on Post-Secondary Capacity and Increased Enrolment. In fact, this group has been meeting to address the challenges we face due to increased enrolment since the spring of 1999.

On the subject of operating grants, our commitment to provide a place for every willing and qualified Ontario student in college or university takes into account the future pressures facing post-secondary education in our province.

To help post-secondary institutions face the pressures of increased enrolment, we increased operating funding by \$103 million this year. This spending increase includes support for an additional 500 spaces in teacher education and 40 more spaces in medical schools across Ontario. Our commitment to continually examine operating funding to ensure it meets the demands of increased enrolment remains, and we will continue to consult with colleges and universities to ensure we are meeting our commitments.

Mr Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent to recess the House so that the budget may be presented.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The member for Brampton Centre has requested unanimous consent. Is there consent? There is not consent.

**Mr Spina:** I want to address the concerns of some members that post-secondary education is becoming less accessible for Ontario students. Members of the opposition spoke of the results of a poll commissioned by the Canadian Union of Public Employees—I'm not sure why they got involved in this, but nevertheless they did—and the Ontario College of University Faculty Associations, which truly does have an interest in this issue.

Our government has stated repeatedly that we will ensure a place for every willing and qualified Ontario student in college or university. This is a government that keeps its promises.

I am pleased to inform the House that we have the highest rate of participation in post-secondary education in Ontario's history. This year 36% of 18- to 24-year-olds are attending a post-secondary institution in our province.

1520

According to the OECD, Ontario has the highest rate of participation in colleges and universities of any industrialized nation on earth. In fact, there are more students attending college and university this year than there were in 1995.

It seems self-evident to me that if more students are attending college or university and enrolment keeps growing, then the system clearly must be accessible. I suspect this has something to do with our cap on tuition increases or our investment in new spaces or perhaps our new initiatives in student aid such as are included in this bill, including the legislation here.

As members know, this government has announced a five-year tuition fee policy that permits the lowest fee increases since the late 1970s. Institutions are restricted to a 2% annual increase over the average from the previous year and cannot compound year-over-year increases. This policy not only keeps tuition rates low but also allows parents and students to reliably plan for the cost of post-secondary education.

I point out that under our policy no institution is required to raise tuition fees.

To improve accessibility, we have launched many initiatives to increase the support available to students in the province. By passing this bill, we will be taking an important step to further improve accessibility, and I call on all members to support it. As I said at the outset, motivation and academic accomplishments of students should be the important factors in determining who can study at college or university. I'm encouraged by the increasing number of students pursuing college or university education, as they are proof that the post-secondary education system remains accessible.

As an alumnus of the University of Windsor and as a person who used the OSAP program in getting through school, I'm extremely proud of the fact that the system works and continues to deliver high-quality education and accessible services to the students of this province,

and I'm very proud of the initiatives that have been taken by this government.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** I'm pleased to respond to the member from Brampton Centre. The member from Brampton Centre made a comment that the construction cranes may be rising, but certainly we've witnessed across this province the destruction of the bulldozers moving in for what you've done to post-secondary education in this province.

You talked about tuition costs and that universities aren't required to raise tuition, that you haven't done that, but because you've cut back on your operating grants, universities have been forced to raise their tuition costs. One only needs to look at the University of Western Ontario. I'm a proud alumnus of UWO. Western has had to raise its tuition costs for its medical school program by 40%. The main reason for that tremendous rise in the cost of tuition for medical school at UWO has been a lack of operating grants provided to the university by the Harris government.

We're hopefully going to have a budget in front of us today, and I hope there is good news in there for the post-secondary institutions of this province, be they colleges or universities. They've been starved by this government, and we need to see a commitment by the government for financial support for these universities.

You talk about accessibility. I agree accessibility is important, but again, what we're seeing as a result of the lowering of operating grants to universities and the rising tuition costs is that it's making it more difficult for individuals to gain accessibility. Even if they do have the OSAP grant available to them, what you're doing, though, in a behind-the-scenes way, is raising the student debt load. I don't think it's acceptable for students leaving a post-secondary institution that the legacy of the Harris government is an increased debt load.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** The member from Brampton Centre referred to a study that was done by Ipsos-Reid and he said "just commissioned by OPSEU," as if to say—

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** CUPE, he said.

**Mr Marchese:** Oh, CUPE, he said—as if to suggest that CUPE—

*Interjection*

**Mr Marchese:** Just another union—as if to suggest that because of the fact they commissioned it, this poll has no significance. But the point is that the Ipsos-Reid poll was commissioned by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations; the Canadian Federation of Students—Ontario; the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, OPSEU; and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, CUPE. It is true that it includes two unions, but the fact of the matter is that this poll has been done by Ipsos-Reid and they do these, of course, with a great amount of accuracy, which you can understand, but

it doesn't matter. The point is that you're disputing the accuracy of the report, I'm assuming.

This is what it says: two thirds, 64%, of Ontarians, including a majority of decided PC voters, 53% of them—53% of your supporters—want increased provincial funding for universities and colleges even if it may mean cancelling tax cuts, and 70% of parents are concerned that kids won't be able to attend university or college even if they are qualified. The main reason? They can't afford it; 79% believe that, including decided PC voters—78%. So there are a whole lot of people out there who are so profoundly worried about your policies and so afraid their kids won't make it to college or university that they're saying to invest in the university system to give hope to the kids so that they'll be able to get there. Otherwise, they're saying, they may not get to a college or university. You've got to at least listen to your Tory supporters, if no one else.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** I am always happy to support the member from Brampton Centre, alumnus of the University of Windsor. I always sort of relate things to my own experience. My daughter is in her fourth year in business, and I think that's what Mr Spina took—a great school.

Kids and opportunities are really what Bill 19 is about. There are those on the other side—the member from Trinity-Spadina has spoken passionately on the issue. Most of his information has been, I think, not presenting a true case of providing the opportunity for the students of Ontario. The member from Elgin-Middlesex-London used the typical Liberal term “tax and spend.” Basically what they want to do is raise taxes, and that's clear. But as a parent of five children, I think it's a joint responsibility. The province should be there and certainly the individuals should be there. I suspect in some area the federal government should be there, on the research side as well.

We're looking at the double cohort. The number of students entering post-secondary is going to double and that's of serious concern to my constituents, and I think to you, Mr Speaker, perhaps for your grandchildren. The SuperBuild fund has committed over \$1.8 billion with our partners to provide 73,000 net new spaces for university and post-secondary. I'm so proud to say that Durham College got, I think, over \$20 million of that to become Durham College and University Centre. It's the way we are approaching it.

Dianne Cunningham, our minister, I believe is using the right tools, the key performance indicators, and then publishing those indicators so students know what the success rate is, what their investment is really buying for them. It is that approach, rather than continuously pouring more money on every problem, providing the right information at the right time so students and their families have the right decision for their future.

I think it's the right thing. I'm disappointed by the opposition and the third party.

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** The member from Brampton Centre makes two interesting points. First, he says that no institution is forced to increase tuition fees

across Ontario, and second, he says that there is total accessibility in terms of any student being able to attend a post-secondary institution. On both counts he is somewhat skewed. We know what the facts are. What are they?

Number one, last year tuition fees rose dramatically right across Ontario, and that of course means that many students are unable to attend. That brings us to the second point, and that is the point of accessibility. How can you talk about accessibility if you raise tuition fees, and in turn add a debt load to students, so that when they graduate they have to pay this money back? In some cases, we know, the debt load is over \$40,000. If you want cases, I'm able to provide them for you, and so are other members in this Legislature.

1530

The other point that I found of great interest is the whole idea of simply saying that this government is spending taxpayers' money usefully and efficiently. That is interesting. I cannot think of one iota that this government has added in terms of spending taxpayers' money frugally when it comes to shutting down Ontario welcome houses and cutting off some money that should go to immigrant settlement services. That can't be. That is wrong.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Brampton Centre has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Spina:** I'd like to thank the members from Elgin-Middlesex-London, Trinity-Spadina, Durham and Davenport for their comments. We appreciate it. It's a two-stage process, folks. First, we do the construction. We've got two years yet to get the operating funds in place. Stay tuned.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Caplan has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1532 to 1602.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Mr Caplan has moved the adjournment of the debate. All those in favour will rise and remain standing.

Thank you.

All those opposed will please rise.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 87; the nays are 5.

**The Speaker:** The motion is carried.

#### 2001 ONTARIO BUDGET

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I move, seconded by Mr Harris, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I would beg the indulgence of the House while the pages deliver the budget. I would ask if all the members have a copy of the budget.

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** Mr Speaker, the budget is balanced for the third year in a row.

It's the first time in nearly 100 years that an Ontario government has presented three consecutive balanced budgets. No other government has provided the people of Ontario with such certainty. No other government has made such responsible choices.

It is responsible to cut taxes. We propose to continue to cut taxes this year.

It is responsible to pay down debt. I am pleased to announce that in the past fiscal year we reduced our debt by the largest amount ever in the history of the province of Ontario—\$3 billion.

It is responsible to demand value for taxpayers' money. We propose to introduce sweeping reforms to hold the entire public sector more accountable to taxpayers.

We must act responsibly in order to guarantee the exceptional quality of life that the people of this province deserve.

Today we will build upon our government's action plan of 21 steps leading into the 21st century.

A plan based on fiscal responsibility, accountability and growth.

That plan is very important. It's both responsive and responsible. It speaks to the issues that people talk about at home with their families, at work with their colleagues and at social gatherings with their friends.

The initiatives that I'm announcing in today's budget stem from weeks of extensive consultations with my colleagues, business people, community organizations and other people from across the province of Ontario.

People know that we have come a long way in Ontario since 1995. They know that they're better off. People have told us that they want to preserve and build on those successes. They understand that government needs to act responsibly in order for this to happen.

The people of Ontario are asking us to think ahead and exercise discipline through strong leadership and prudent management of their money. They are asking us to focus on those things that matter to them the most.

This plan does that.

Every day, hard-working families across this province make responsible decisions about their own budgets. They expect governments to do the same thing, even when those decisions are difficult.

Government should not be afraid to venture into new territory. Government should embrace the innovation demonstrated by so many successful small businesses and look at new ways of doing things.

This plan does that.

What I am presenting to the people of Ontario today is a clear vision for the future.

## 1610

There are many people who have helped in this process, and I'd like to take a few minutes to thank just a few of them.

I thank our Premier, Mike Harris, for his support and unparalleled leadership. I deeply value his dedication to building on our strengths in Ontario.

I'd also like to thank all of my caucus and cabinet colleagues for their input and advice over the past 12 weeks, and especially my parliamentary assistants, Ernie Hardeman and John O'Toole, for dedicating so much of their time and effort over these past 12 weeks to our pre-budget consultations.

I'd also like to give special thanks to the very dedicated and talented staff at the Ministry of Finance. They're the people who worked tremendously long hours, sacrificing time with their friends and families, to make this budget a reality. I'd especially like to acknowledge my deputy minister, Bob Christie; the assistant deputy minister, Gabriel Sékaly; my chief of staff, Bronwen Evans; and the rest of my staff for their hard work, patience and enthusiasm from the beginning of this process to today.

My wife, Christine Elliott, and our three children, John, Galen and Quinn, also deserve thanks for their patience and understanding and support. Hi, guys.

Finally and most importantly, the people of Ontario who provided their ideas and their advice through the process of the pre-budget consultation deserve special thanks. This budget is really for them, for all the people in Ontario who can count on a better tomorrow because of the decisions which we are making today.

So that as many people as possible have access to this speech today, it is being carried on the Internet through our Ministry of Finance Web site at [gov.on.ca](http://gov.on.ca). Just follow the links.

Under previous governments, the philosophy was to raise taxes, to spend more of people's hard-earned money. The size and scope of government grew. High taxes and big government crippled economic growth.

In 1995, the Mike Harris government changed that. We said then, and we continue to say clearly, that tax dollars belong to the people of Ontario, not the government. The people of Ontario know that the government can't give them anything that the government hasn't taken away from them in the first place.

We believe that, given the opportunity, the hard-working people of this province will invest and spend their money in ways that will help the economy to grow. And they have. Today, the people of Ontario have more money to spend and invest as they choose, and we are all reaping the benefits.

Since 1995, our economy has grown by almost 25%. The private sector consensus is that our economy continues to grow this year at 2.3%, and growth is expected to accelerate to 3.6% in 2002. Every year for the past four years, we have matched or exceeded the consensus. I'm confident that we will exceed it again.

This outstanding growth in our economy didn't happen by accident. We had a very deliberate plan. We had confidence in the people of the province, confidence in their entrepreneurial spirit, and confidence in their desire to turn around the fortunes of this province. The people of Ontario accepted our plan and they accepted our challenge. Now the people of Ontario are sharing the dividends of this plan.

At the heart of the plan were tax cuts. Tax cuts helped make us leaders and they will help to keep us leaders.

Ontario paved the way for tax cuts in this country. I'm proud to say that every province in Canada is following our lead. The government of Nova Scotia is cutting taxes, the government of New Brunswick is cutting taxes, the government of Manitoba is cutting taxes, the government of Prince Edward Island is cutting taxes. So too are Quebec, Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

Even the federal government is cutting taxes. Finally, the federal government is recognizing that the Ontario example works. On February 18, 1999, the federal Finance Minister, Paul Martin, said this in the House of Commons: "Overwhelmingly, the best thing one can do for low-income families is to make sure that they either pay very low taxes or no taxes at all."

In Ontario, we have told 660,000 lower-income earners that we don't want their income tax money. With the changes proposed in this budget, an additional 75,000 people would pay no Ontario income tax. We believe they should keep that money for themselves and their families. Yet these same 735,000 lower-income earners would continue to pay income tax to the federal government.

Think about how much better off these families would be if they didn't pay any income tax at all. So we challenge the federal government to match Ontario's income tax cuts for the lowest income earners of this province and this country. It's the responsible thing to do.

I am pleased to announce today another promise kept to the taxpayers of Ontario. We propose to complete our 20% personal income tax cut promised in 1999. Ninety-five per cent of taxpayers—virtually everyone earning less than \$100,000 a year—would see a cut of at least 20%.

Our tax cuts since 1995 mean that a family of four—two working parents and two children—with an income of \$60,000 would pay about \$2,300 less in Ontario personal income tax. That's money to spend on a new computer, it's almost four months' worth of groceries, or a year's tuition at a community college—money to spend as they choose.

Our government has returned money to all taxpayers in this province. People at the lower end of the income scale have seen the biggest percentage cuts. We are proud of the steps we have taken over the years to return money to people with lower incomes.

It's time now to look more closely at how much tax is paid by middle-class families in Ontario. It's time to begin to eliminate the personal income surtax, a tax that

hits Ontario's taxpayers with incomes that start at \$54,000. People at this income level are by no means rich. This tax is an unnecessary burden on thousands of middle-class families.

We're proposing to eliminate this surtax for more than 340,000 people, and that's just the first step. I suspect our critics will once again question whether middle-class families deserve such a tax cut. They will ask us today the same question they asked in 1995: is now the right time for tax cuts? They will ask, can we afford to cut taxes? I ask them this: can we afford not to cut taxes?

Since we started cutting taxes, our tax revenues have increased by more than \$15 billion. Since we started cutting taxes, our businesses have created more than 822,000 jobs. That's enough jobs to employ the combined populations of Hamilton, Kitchener, Windsor and Sudbury. Since we started cutting taxes, business investment in this province has increased by 66%. Our economy is better for it; our people are better for it.

1620

Our tax cuts benefit the people of Ontario no matter what part of the province they live in, no matter how much money they make, no matter what they do for a living.

They notice our personal income tax cuts in their pay stubs and when they fill out their tax returns.

They see the evidence of the tax cuts when the companies they work for expand or hire additional staff or launch a new division.

Millions of people in Ontario rely on businesses—small, medium and large—for their livelihood. I believe the first priority of every business in Ontario should be paying wages, not taxes.

That's why I'm pleased to announce today Ontario's Edge.

It's a package of initiatives aimed at keeping the businesses of this province strong and encouraging new businesses to set up shop here. Enhancing our quality of life is central to this plan's success.

The concept is simple. It's designed to help us achieve our goal that within 10 years Ontario will enjoy the best-performing economy and the highest quality of life in North America.

There are four key components to Ontario's Edge.

The significant corporate income tax cuts announced in last year's budget are the first component.

I am announcing today that we will table legislation to implement the full schedule for our corporate income tax cuts each year between now and 2005.

By 2005, Ontario would have a lower combined corporate income tax rate than any of the 50 US states. No Canadian province would have a lower general corporate income tax rate.

This move alone would make Ontario a prime destination in North America to do business.

Businesses in Ontario have told us that they need to know our schedule for cutting their taxes so they can plan ahead, so they can know how much extra money they will have each year in order to expand their businesses or

hire more people. That's why we want to give them certainty. We know from experience that they will respond positively.

The second component of Ontario's Edge is to begin to eliminate the job-killing capital tax.

Thousands of businesses across Ontario, in every sector, must pay capital tax whether they make money or not. That means capital tax claws back money that should be used to keep employees on the payroll.

Our Business Tax Review Panel told us that this tax deters foreign companies from investing here. They told us it is a cost of doing business that almost no other country imposes. I would like to thank the members of the Business Tax Review Panel and especially its chair, D'Arcy Delamere, for all of their hard work. Mr Speaker, I am pleased to announce today that we propose to follow their recommendation and take the first step toward eliminating the capital tax.

This year I will introduce legislation to give a break to all businesses that pay capital tax by raising the threshold at which it becomes payable. The first \$5 million in capital would be tax-free.

This step would relieve more than 11,000 small and medium-sized businesses in Ontario of the burden of capital tax and directly support the creation of jobs. It would create more opportunities for our businesses and our economy to grow.

The third component of Ontario's Edge is to undertake a thorough review of tax incentives.

The Business Tax Review Panel told us these incentives can make the tax system too complex.

We want to ensure that our tax incentives are effective, useful and relevant. We also believe that tax incentives for certain activities should not be a substitute for low tax rates across the board.

These first three components of Ontario's Edge are intended to build on Ontario's tax competitiveness.

As announced in the throne speech, an independent task force will monitor Ontario's productivity and compare it with our competitors. Roger Martin, who is the dean of the Joseph L. Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, will lead the task force measuring our progress.

Mr Speaker, there is one more aspect to Ontario's Edge.

The fourth component is to build on the quality of life we hold so dear in Ontario.

When businesses come here, they bring more than employees—they bring families who make this province their home.

As a result, our communities are expanding.

There are more cars on our roads and more congestion on our highways.

Mr Speaker, today I am announcing a way to address the gridlock that is threatening to compromise the quality of life in our urban areas in Ontario.

It is important that we solve this problem.

Allow me to tell you a story I heard on a recent visit to Kanata.

I met a Canadian high-tech entrepreneur who recently moved his family and his business back to Ontario, back to Ottawa, from Silicon Valley, San Jose, California. Quite simply, he left California because he was tired of fighting traffic—tired of spending more time in his car on the freeway than at home with his family.

He said Ontario offered him a better way of life. And it does.

He also said our taxes in Ontario are now competitive.

Mr Speaker, in order to keep people like this man and his family and his business in Ontario, we must address the gridlock on our roads.

That's why I am announcing today that we will focus the remaining \$500 million of the \$1-billion SuperBuild Millennium Partnerships initiative on transportation and environmental initiatives.

We challenge our partners in the private sector and the municipal and federal levels of government to join us and invest in this important initiative.

Since 1995, our government has invested more than \$5 billion in the province's highway system. Our commitment is ongoing. We are determining how best to expand and manage our highways. As part of this exercise, SuperBuild will examine opportunities for the private sector to contribute to our highway system.

In fact, tomorrow morning SuperBuild will begin the process of calling on the private sector to complete Highway 407 East all the way to Highways 35 and 115.

Investing in transportation will take some of the pressure off our highways in Ottawa, Toronto and several of our other largest urban areas and growing regions.

We want to ensure that the high-tech entrepreneur in Kanata and all commuters, whether they're from Orangeville, Clarington, Richmond Hill or Whitby, have access to a seamless system of transportation and an excellent quality of life.

It is clear that Ontario has an edge over most other jurisdictions in North America when it comes to quality of life.

Clean air and water are important aspects of our quality of life in Ontario.

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to announce we are increasing our investment in the environment.

We will provide \$25 million more this year to ensure that our drinking water is safe and our air is clean. This means that we have increased operating funding to the Ministry of the Environment by 51% since 1997-98.

We will also continue our commitment to the natural areas protection program, which protects the beauty of the Bruce Trail, the Rouge Valley, the Lynde Marsh and the Niagara Escarpment. We will contribute \$5 million this year.

**1630**

Thriving arts and culture are also important aspects of our quality of life. We are devoting more \$90 million to arts and culture. This year, we are doubling our funding to the arts endowment fund, from \$5 million to \$10 million.

Clean air, good schools, efficient transportation, quality hospitals and low taxes are all part of creating a healthy and competitive business environment Ontario. When our businesses are successful, so too are the people who work for them.

The evidence is all around us. It's in the young family buying their first home. It's in the new graduate getting a meaningful job. It's in all the opportunities people in Ontario have today that they did not have before 1995.

Mr Speaker, we want the people of Ontario to continue to have the kinds of opportunities they enjoy today. We want an economy that creates the jobs they need. We also want to guarantee them continued access to good schools, caring doctors and nurses, and well-run hospitals—to the public services they value the most.

People told us that health care is their top spending priority. We listened and we responded. We have invested as no other government has before in this vital area. This year alone we are increasing health care spending by \$1.2 billion, or 5.4%. This is comparable to the average increase of 5.3% in all other provinces, excluding Alberta—

**The Speaker:** The House come to order, please. Sorry for the interruption, Minister of Finance.

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** Mr Speaker, we have kept our promise on health care spending. We have increased our investment in health care by almost \$6 billion since we came to office. The federal government, on the other hand, is providing less to health care in Ontario today than it did back then. Incredible as it may seem, Ontario has been paying 100% of the increase in health care costs with no help from Ottawa.

Instead, the federal government is poised to show a surplus of nearly \$20 billion for 2000-01. Surely the federal government could invest some of this money in health care.

Mr Speaker, we have exceeded our Blueprint commitment on health care spending. And we will continue to invest in health care to meet the needs of this province as the population grows and the population ages.

In 1995-96, 38 cents of every dollar that we spent on programs went to health care. This year it will be 45 cents.

Today we are spending \$745 per second on health care—\$745 each and every second in the province of Ontario. In one minute, that adds up to nearly \$45,000—more than some families earn in a year. In the time it takes to deliver this speech, we will have spent more than \$2 million on health care.

Sir John A. Macdonald was fond of reminding his colleagues to "look a little ahead...." Well, when we look ahead five short years, we could see health care consuming 60 cents of every dollar we spend on programs.

We cannot continue to increase our spending on health care at this rate. It's simply not sustainable.

The Fyke Commission on Medicare in Saskatchewan put it bluntly. They said, "Poor organization, weak accountability, and especially the lack of quality and fair-

ness—not money—are the main shortcomings of the health care system."

Ontario is not alone in this dilemma.

There is not a single province in Canada that is faced with spiralling health care costs.

The facts speak for themselves. What we need now is leadership.

The Ontario government believes that fundamental reform is necessary to save Canada's health care system. Reform on two fronts. The first is the way the federal government funds health care. I call upon the federal government to provide its fair share—50% of all health care funding increases.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Would the minister take his seat.

The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, come to order. This is his last warning. I don't know if anybody has ever been kicked out in the budget, but you're going to be the first; last warning to you.

Sorry for the interruption, Minister of Finance.

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** The second reform is to make the system work better.

We must act now. And we must act together. Mr Speaker, this is a discussion that must move beyond the walls of this Legislature.

That is why I am calling on all members of the Legislature to take this debate into their communities—directly to the people of Ontario.

Members of our caucus will meet with their constituents. They will gather ideas. We want to have an open and honest dialogue with people about the future of health care.

At the same time, we will ask our partners in the health care system—doctors, nurses, patients and administrators—to help us identify the best ways to deliver quality health care.

We must take a common-sense approach to health care. We must be responsible and look at all options to help us get to our goal of reliable, high-quality health care.

We encourage the federal government to take this issue quickly to mind and to take it seriously.

Mr Speaker, the people of this province and this country cannot wait 18 months for Mr Romanow to deliver his report.

It may be that the federal government does not feel the same urgency that we do.

When your financial stake in the debate is less than 14 cents on the dollar, it may be easier to procrastinate.

Wasting time does not serve the people of Ontario who depend on our health care system. People need to know that when their child is sick, he or she will see a doctor. When their elderly mother breaks a hip, she will get the care she needs. When they need an annual checkup, they will get one.

Mr Speaker, one of the first steps in health care reform is accountability.

The people of Ontario have a right to know that they are getting value for the money they invest in health care. At not a penny is misspent.

That is the responsible thing to do. We intend to introduce legislation that will require hospitals to balance their budgets each year.

We will showcase the achievements of the most efficient hospitals.

For too long in this province we have rewarded poor performance by funding hospital deficits each year. There is no incentive to achieve better results. That is why we intend to encourage all hospitals to strive for excellence and efficiency.

We must be accountable for every dollar of taxpayer money that we spend—whether it goes to a hospital, a doctor, a community care access centre, or any other health care provider.

Last year, of every dollar that we spent on programs and capital, more than 80 cents went to individuals and organizations in the broader public sector.

Mr Speaker, that is why hospitals, school boards, municipalities, social service agencies, colleges and universities must be accountable to the taxpayers of Ontario for the money that they spend.

The need for more accountability in the entire public sector was expressed to me by the Ontario Financial Review Commission. I would like to thank the members of the commission and its chair, Bob Lord, for all of their hard work.

Our government has set the bar on accountability. We made it against the law in Ontario for the government to run a deficit, forcing future governments to employ the same fiscal prudence that we have. Cabinet ministers face real penalty for failure: a cut in their salary.

Today I want to raise that bar.

Mr Speaker, we are proposing to introduce a new Public Sector Accountability Act.

It would require all major organizations that receive taxpayer dollars from our government to balance their budgets each year. That is accountability to the taxpayers who fund them.

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But accountability does not end when the books are balanced. True accountability goes far beyond the numbers. Public sector organizations would have to issue plans to show what their objectives are and track their progress against those plans.

They would identify and demonstrate areas where they excel and cite areas where there is need for improvement. They would report on their progress in finding new ways of delivering services. They would look for areas where the private sector could do a better job. And they would report on their efforts to find ongoing efficiencies.

We challenge them to show courage, to focus on services that are the most valuable to the people of Ontario, to eliminate programs that are outdated and that no longer serve their original purpose.

We will call on experts in the private sector to form a panel to review the role of government in the 21st

century. This panel will start a public discussion on where government does and does not belong.

We will be undertaking a value-for-money review of all government spending. It will rely on private sector expertise in carrying out its work. This review will answer common sense questions when assessing any government program or service, questions like: is the service meeting its original objectives? How important is the service? Who should be delivering it?

This value-for-money review will direct us to wasteful activities that could be eliminated. It will generate savings to invest in our highest priorities.

In order to launch this process, I am pleased to announce today that the province is getting out of the banking business. We are seeking a buyer for the Province of Ontario Savings Office. It is clear the private sector has more expertise than we do when it comes to running a bank.

The recent lease of the Bruce nuclear facility is another example of providing value for money to Ontario's taxpayers. Simply put, there was a need for investment at the Bruce nuclear facility to improve its performance without jeopardizing safety. Bruce Power, a private sector consortium, answered our call, leasing the facility from Ontario Power Generation.

This is the kind of cost-effective solution that leads to greater value for electricity customers and taxpayers alike. Bruce Power's success encourages us to seek other avenues of private sector expertise, other ways to increase value to customers and value to taxpayers.

I believe that no other jurisdiction in North America is so active in pursuing value for taxpayers' money. We owe this to the people of Ontario.

It is a priority for this government to care for the most vulnerable people in our society: people who are unable to work because of disability or disease; people who are at risk of violence. Supporting our most vulnerable people is perhaps the most responsible thing we can do. It is our duty as a government.

Aging parents of adult children with developmental disabilities should not have to worry about where their children will live when they are gone, or who will provide for them when they no longer can.

I am confident that every member of this House has encountered families in this very difficult situation. We can only begin to understand the challenges these families face. That is why I am announcing that we will invest \$67 million over five years to construct new facilities for adults with developmental disabilities.

In addition, we will provide \$55 million this year, growing to nearly \$200 million by 2006-07, to enhance services for people with developmental disabilities and attract more quality caregivers. We recognize that these dedicated workers deserve our support.

I would like to thank the Ontario Association for Community Living for its advice in determining the best means of supporting adults with developmental disabilities.

Children with severe disabilities have the same right to live with dignity and comfort as do other children. The province's network of children's treatment centres is often an essential support in these children's lives. They provide a wide range of valuable services to children with cerebral palsy, spina bifida, autism, brain injuries and developmental learning disabilities.

It is the responsibility of government and our society at large to provide as much as we can for these children and their families. That is why I am announcing a \$20-million annual increase in funding for children's treatment centres. That is a 40% annual increase.

Today in Ontario no woman or child should have to tolerate domestic violence or live in fear of an abusive family member. That is why I am announcing that we will spend \$26 million over the next four years to create 300 new beds in shelters across Ontario. We will also provide \$9 million annually for counselling and other support.

This budget also includes other measures to ensure the safety of people and communities.

For example, we will double the number of youth justice committees from 18 to 36. In these youth justice committees, non-violent young offenders face probing examinations of why they did what they did, what's going on in their lives, how it affects the community and how that young offender can make up for it.

Intervening in the lives of non-violent young offenders and holding them accountable for their actions in a meaningful way is one of the most important things we can do for these young people. Active intervention by the community actually makes a difference in the lives of these young people. All of us benefit if we can prevent them from graduating to more serious crimes.

It is up to government to ensure vulnerable people in our society have our support. That is what we are doing. We believe that is the role of a responsible government.

Building growth in our economy requires an investment in our people. Our young people are perhaps our biggest resource.

This government has invested strongly in the well-being of children and young people from the moment they take their first steps to the day they start their first job.

A foundation of our approach is to invest in programs that reach children in their earliest years, when finding and fixing problems does the most good. I am very pleased today to announce that we will increase our investment in early years programs by \$114 million this year, growing to \$193 million.

This action builds on a solid base of programs that support families and help children before they enter school. These programs reach children early to ensure healthier growth later. A key new initiative will be a system of local early years centres throughout the province for children and their parents.

Our throne speech set out a vision for education in this province—a vision of high standards for students and more choice for parents.

Excellence and investment in our public education system pay dividends in the future. Since 1995 we have increased education spending from \$12.9 billion to almost \$14 billion, which is more than required to meet enrolment growth.

I am pleased to announce today that our allocation for the publicly funded school system will increase by \$360 million this year.

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This funding will ensure that students, whether they go to a public, Catholic or francophone school, have the tools they need to succeed. We are firmly committed to a quality publicly funded education system. We will continue to make new investments in the publicly funded education system to improve the quality of education in Ontario.

In addition, for years we've heard from parents who want their children educated in their own culture and religion. Some parents feel the only way to do that is to send their children to an independent school. For many, the cost is prohibitive.

While we continue to provide increased funding to our public education system, we believe it is now time to address the concerns of these parents. Over the next five years, we propose to phase in a partial tax credit for parents of children at independent schools. With this measure, Ontario would join other provinces in supporting educational choice.

Would the House come to order, please.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Would the member for Timmins-James Bay come to order. This is his last warning.

Sorry, Minister of Finance.

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** I often tell young people that the best investment they can make is in their own education. As a government, we believe it is one of the best investments we can make for the future of this province.

That is why I am pleased to announce one of the largest investments ever made in Ontario's post-secondary education system. In the fall of 2003, a record number of new university and college students will arrive on campus. There are three reasons for this. First of all—and this is good news—more young people are pursuing higher education than in the past. Secondly, the baby-boom echo will cause the numbers to swell. Thirdly, all grade 12 and OAC students graduate together for the first time in 2003—the double cohort. These are landmark events in our education system. They demand a landmark response.

Today I am pleased to announce that we are providing certainty to each and every one of these students, and their parents, that there will be a place for them in an Ontario college or university. Through our SuperBuild Corp, we have already committed to constructing 73,000 new student spaces. Today I am announcing the next step. We will increase our support for colleges and universities by a projected \$293 million in 2003-04.

Government is planning ahead so that our colleges and universities can plan ahead with a clear funding frame

ork in place. We are taking the extraordinary step of committing today to the level of funding we will provide post-secondary institutions over the next three years. We are providing them with the certainty they need to be able to plan for 2003.

Preparing for the influx of post-secondary students we are expecting in the coming years isn't just about money. We must continue to find creative ways to educate our young people, to prepare them for the working world beyond college and beyond university, to pinpoint the skills they need to get a job and provide courses that teach those skills. I am pleased to announce an exciting new venture in post-secondary education. We have invested \$60 million in the Ontario Institute of Technology, a new university to be located on the campus of Durham College. The OIT will focus on providing students with a seamless transition among college and university programs. It will provide one-stop shopping for students looking for a mix of academic and hands-on experience.

The responsible choices we make today guarantee tomorrow's prosperity. There is no question there are challenges ahead, and there's no question we are the government to tackle those challenges.

Our plan is a solid one: cut taxes for growth, spend accountably, spend responsibly. Our plan is common sense.

Our plan does not end with this budget. We must not be complacent. We must continue to be responsive to the needs of the people of this province. We must continue to make responsible choices on their behalf. We must continue to focus on our pledge to make Ontario the best place to live, work and raise a family in the 21st century.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Mr Duncan has moved adjournment of the debate.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### RESPONSIBLE CHOICES FOR GROWTH AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (2001 BUDGET), 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR DES CHOIX RÉFLÉCHIS FAVORISANT LA CROISSANCE ET LA RESPONSABILISATION (BUDGET DE 2001)

Mr Flaherty moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 45, An Act to implement measures contained in the 2001 Budget and to amend various statutes / Projet de loi 45, Loi mettant en oeuvre des mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 2001 et modifiant diverses lois.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

The minister for a short statement?

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** The bill fulfills many of the commitments that are in the budget speech.

### PUBLIC SECTOR ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR LA RESPONSABILISATION DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

Mr Flaherty moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act respecting the accountability of public sector organizations / Projet de loi 46, Loi portant sur la responsabilisation des organismes publics.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1700 to 1705.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Amott, Ted	Hastings, John	Runciman, Robert W.
Baird, John R.	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Snobelen, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Sterling, Norman W.
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Stewart, R. Gary
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	Marland, Margaret	Tilson, David
Ecker, Janet	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Flaherty, Jim	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettsaufer, Wayne
Galt, Doug	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gilchrist, Steve	Molinari, Tina R.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gill, Raminder	Munro, Julia	Wood, Bob
Guzzo, Garry J.	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David
Hardeman, Ernie	Newman, Dan	
Harris, Michael D.	O'Toole, John	

#### Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Curling, Alvin	Marchese, Rosario
Bisson, Gilles	Di Cocco, Caroline	Martel, Shelley

Bountrogianni, Marie	Dombrowsky, Leona	Martin, Tony
Boyer, Claudette	Duncan, Dwight	McMeekin, Ted
Bradley, James J.	Gerretsen, John	Parsons, Emie
Bryant, Michael	Hampton, Howard	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Conway, Sean G.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smitherman, George
Cordiano, Joseph	Lankin, Frances	
Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 52; the nays are 37.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I move that the House do now adjourn.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1709.*

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No. 14



Nº 14

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario

Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 10 May 2001

Jeudi 10 mai 2001

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 10 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 10 mai 2001

*The House met at 1004.*

*Prayers.*

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### ONTARIO NATURAL HERITAGE ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR LE PATRIMOINE NATUREL DE L'ONTARIO

Mr Gilchrist moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to ensure responsible and acceptable development and to protect the natural heritage of the Province of Ontario / Projet de loi 17, Loi visant à assurer l'aménagement judicieux et acceptable du territoire et à protéger le patrimoine naturel de la province de l'Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson)** According to the standing orders, you have 10 minutes to make your presentation.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** Thank you very much. This act is a comprehensive vision of how we can better balance the development needs and the environmental requirements in the province of Ontario. It follows on a crusade that I guess began in earnest on Rouge Park Day, July 20, 1999, when as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing I indicated that I was sympathetic to the appeal to apply a minister's zoning order to the entire Oak Ridges moraine, pending a review of the opportunities to determine which portions of the moraine are worthy of long-term environmental protection.

There were some interesting developments that followed on that announcement, and I won't dwell on them in this House, except to say that a developer who had a vested interest decided that something other than the normal legislative process was the way to change government policy. To say that it has backfired would be an understatement.

The good news is that what had been a very well kept secret, the Oak Ridges moraine and what it meant to the quality of life, not just in Toronto but in communities running 160 kilometres in both directions east and west of the city, is now known to literally millions of people in Ontario. The group, the long-term stewards of the campaign to save the Oak Ridges moraine, typically

would have 30 or 40 people showing up to meetings. We saw those numbers swell to 3,000 people showing up at Richmond Hill council and equal numbers indicating their displeasure with certain planning decisions that were made by York region as well.

To their credit, we saw the politicians in Richmond Hill reverse their previous approvals and side with the environmentalists, and perhaps go beyond what was asked of them, determining that it was more appropriate to try and find a balance than simply to allow the paving over of one of the most environmentally sensitive portions of this land form.

We then saw York region follow a similar tack and, again, to their credit, actually write a cheque to help support the folks who are fighting the good fight at the Ontario Municipal Board.

I also want to pay credit to the city of Toronto politicians who, when denied standing at the Ontario Municipal Board, wrote a cheque in the amount of a million dollars to ensure that the most up-to-date science and best experts could be applied to the determination, before the Ontario Municipal Board, of the merits of a specific case in Richmond Hill.

I don't want to dwell, though, on that one planning issue, because the Oak Ridges moraine is far broader than that. As I mentioned, it runs for 160 kilometres, from the Niagara Escarpment out to Northumberland. It is the source of the headwaters of 31 different rivers and streams. It is the home of untold species of fish, flora and fauna and, I think more than anything else, it affords us an opportunity to create a greenbelt, a pause, in the unfettered growth of the city of Toronto. It is a shame that what had stood as the greenbelt at Steeles Avenue was eliminated by a previous government. In his wisdom, Bill Davis, back in the early 1970s, had foreseen the need to encourage urban intensification and discourage urban sprawl, the very issue that faces us here today.

1010

I want it clearly on the record that I am not opposed to development. I am not ignorant of the fact that as long as the federal government is allowing a quarter of a million new people to come into our country every year, and 70% of them make the wise decision to move to the greater Toronto area, obviously there will have to be accommodation built for them. That has spurred an awful lot of the growth we have seen over the last 20 years in the Toronto region.

But, having said that, there has ceased to be the kind of balance that once existed. My bill, starting with the

protections on the moraine, seeks to restore that balance. Any area that the Ministry of Natural Resources determines to be an area of natural and scientific interest—a wetland, a bog, the headwaters of a river—should be protected from any development for all time. This is not a quick fix. This is not something that's politically expedient. This is setting forth a vision of what we think our province should look like 50, 100, 500 years from now.

I am immensely grateful and proud that the cabinet and our government have dedicated more land to parkland in this province than any government in any jurisdiction in the history of the world. In our own community we have created, in the form of the Rouge park, the world's largest park in an urban setting. It is a colossal achievement and, according to Glenn De Baeremaeker, the president of Save the Rouge Valley System and one of the long-time champions of the need to protect the Rouge, the government has deeded over, at today's value, over \$1 billion worth of land in the creation of that park. The crusade will continue. But this struck me as highly ironic: having made the \$1-billion investment, having protected from the headwaters right down to Lake Ontario one of the largest rivers in the province and one of the most significant in the GTA, it made no sense to then lose the source of those waters to rampant development.

Clearly, the people who have made the decision to move to the Toronto area have done so recognizing the myriad of features we are blessed with. One of those is certainly having the greenest major city in the world. It is critically important that we build on our past successes in defending the environment and make a bold statement of what can be done on the Oak Ridges moraine, to find that balance on the lands that are environmentally significant. They must be protected for all time. Even on the other lands—tablelands, scrub land that isn't good for growing much more than houses on—we still need to make sure that the density and the development applications that are brought forward are done in a way that is very sensitive to the greater environmental needs in that region.

I don't want to leave aside the fact that my bill, though, goes well beyond the Oak Ridges moraine. Section 4 of the act requires that there be a plan applied within 120 days, a long-term vision on the Oak Ridges moraine. The only change I made in this bill from the one I tabled in the last session is that in the lead-up, in that first 120 days, any development application that's outstanding will be submitted to a very critical and scientific appraisal, and the merits of natural and scientific interests will be applied. But after the 120 days, there will be an absolute plan that will protect the entire moraine.

The bill also amends the Conservation Land Act by prohibiting any authority—any municipality or anyone else—from permitting development on any other area of natural or scientific interest or on any wetlands in southern Ontario with an area greater than two hectares.

I want it clearly on the record: some of my colleagues have told me that in their municipality they've had a

problem with the definition of areas of natural and scientific interest, and I want it very clearly understood that I would expect the MNR to define those standards to the point that all reasonable people agree on what does or does not qualify as an ANSI before this bill is applied.

Sections 6 and 7 of the bill allow for new development charges in areas of growth to pay for parkland acquisition. But on the flip side, in those parts of our province where development has already occurred once, an old factory existed and has since been torn down, no municipality would be allowed to put up a barrier to redevelopment of brownfield sites by applying development charges again. The streets are there, the schools are there, the sidewalks are there; there is no compelling argument to penalize those folks who would try and redevelop what are otherwise idle lands.

There are a number of other incidental changes that are made to the Ontario Municipal Board Act.

The Planning Act is also changed so that, again turning back the clock to a previous government, politicians will once again be accountable for the major planning decisions in Ontario. You would be able to make an appeal to cabinet if you disagreed with the results of an OMB hearing—only on significant issues. We clearly understand that we don't expect the cabinet to be deciding minor severances. But on the big issues facing the future of the environment in Ontario, finding that balance between development and growth and the protection of our communities and our environment, we believe it is appropriate for politicians to be accountable. This bill restores that accountability. This bill restores that protection.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'm pleased to join the debate on this bill. I encouraged the member to bring it forward, having seen his last bill, because I thought his last bill was a good step forward on the moraine. I must say I was surprised, because I had been led to believe that the bill was essentially the same as the one Mr Gilchrist introduced a year ago.

There's one very dramatic change in the bill. Last year when Mr Gilchrist introduced his bill, the basic theme of it was the freeze on development on the Oak Ridges moraine. The lead paragraph on his last bill was that the bill, if passed, would have a one-year freeze: "This bill is a comprehensive bill designed to freeze all new development on the moraine." In the questions and answers: "If passed, it calls for an immediate freeze on all development."

The centrepiece of the last bill was a freeze on development, pending the development of a plan. There's quite a fundamental change in this bill today. It does not call for that freeze any longer. I find that unfortunate, because I assumed when Mr Gilchrist introduced his bill last year that that was fundamental to it: in order to get the proper planning done on the moraine, there needed to be a freeze on development. The bill today has changed very dramatically and that freeze no longer applies. It says, "Development on the moraine must consider whether the areas of land and water affected by the

development are areas of natural and scientific interest as defined in the Conservation Land Act."

I gather that the government wanted this bill changed so that it wouldn't interfere with development on the moraine, but it fairly fundamentally changes the bill. While there's much in the bill to commend it, the centrepiece of it, which was, "Let's stop approving development on the moraine until we get a comprehensive plan," is gone.

I salute those people involved in the moraine. I was very much involved in the Rouge park. There was a community group that really did the work. They exist till this day. It happened that we were in government—the Liberal Party was in government in the late 1980s—and we had the opportunity to listen to the save-the-Rouge group, and I remember very well the day that David Peterson announced the establishment of the Rouge park. It was a proud day for Ontario. It was in 1990 that he announced the largest urban park, and today that lives on. It proved to me that a community group like the save-the-Rouge group, in this case save-the-Oak-Ridges-moraine group, can achieve much with truth on their side and hard work.

While I certainly will be supporting this bill, I must say to the member how surprised I was, when I'd been told the bill was the same, to find that the centrepiece is gone. The thing that a year ago he was most proud of, which was the freeze on development, is no longer there. I don't know the reason for the change, but it's quite fundamental. I think those who are fighting for the Oak Ridges moraine will recognize that what they thought was coming forward from the member has changed quite fundamentally.

**1020**

As I say, last year I read Mr Gilchrist's release carefully and said I was supportive of it. As soon as I found that he might have a chance to reintroduce it, I thought I'd be supportive of it again. Then, as I examined it, I found that what was the most important part of the bill last year—the freeze to force a comprehensive plan development—gone, disappeared. I understand the pressure that might come and the reasons for that but, as I say, it surprised me.

My colleague Mr Colle, the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, has a well-thought-out bill on the Oak Ridges moraine that would dramatically advance the Oak Ridges moraine. Ms Churley from the NDP also has a bill that would advance it. This is our opportunity to save a precious resource in the province of Ontario. Mr Gilchrist's bill, substantially watered down, is a step forward. Mr Colle's and Ms Churley's bills would be a really substantive step forward.

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'm pleased to stand today to speak on Bill 17, An Act to ensure responsible and acceptable development and to protect the natural heritage of the province of Ontario. I thank the member for Scarborough East for bringing forth this private member's bill which draws attention to this very significant area of our province.

The province has initiated, with former Minister of Municipal Affairs Tony Clement and current Minister of Municipal Affairs Hodgson, the Smart Growth initiative in our province. I'd like to make a few points on Smart Growth and then talk a little about the moraine that affects my riding.

If we want to talk about protecting green spaces, I think we should talk about protecting them in a province-wide solution as well. That's why we have initiated Smart Growth. Municipalities across Ontario are faced with growth pressures. We see that in almost every urban area of the province, particularly those that have a significant amount of sewer and water capacity. What we need to do is give municipalities the tools to help them plan their growth very smartly and wisely.

For example, our brownfield proposal will allow for the redevelopment of abandoned sites that right now are just eyesores in their communities. I think that's a very significant move forward. Developers and municipalities in the province will be able to work together to redevelop these sites in a safe, responsible and productive manner. More importantly, it will ease the pressure of development on our natural green spaces, which is exactly what all the opposition parties support.

Growth is not going away. The challenge is to deal with it smartly, respecting the need for development and the need to preserve our green spaces, not just for the Oak Ridges moraine but for the entire province.

I'd like to speak a little on a moraine in my riding that has not really become contentious but is an area of great importance to the residents, particularly the area of Oro-Medonte. The Oro moraine is between the city of Orillia and the city of Barrie. It's about 20 miles long and roughly eight to 10 miles wide in different areas. There is a huge resource of gravel and aggregate in this particular area, and we see pressures on a continual basis by the gravel operators, aggregate producers, wanting to take more and more applications for the removal of aggregate.

As well, it's an area that has tremendous growth pressures from both the city of Barrie and the city of Orillia, because it's an area of the province that many people are moving to. They're moving out of the GTA. They want to move into an area they can basically retire to. They want to build in these beautiful areas. You've seen areas such as Hardwood Hills, Horseshoe Valley and the Oro hills. There's tremendous pressure in those areas. As well, we are having a lot of pressures from people who want to develop golf courses in these areas.

All these pressures involve the removal of groundwater and/or aggregate. I've met a lot, over the last year and a half, with people in the area who have a strong concern about protection, the same as the people in the Oak Ridges moraine would like to see the protection of that.

Earlier this spring, I hosted a one-day symposium. I had a number of speakers come in to speak on the value of the moraine. We had people from OMAFRA and people from conservation authorities. We sat around together and took a proactive approach on what types of

changes would have to be made to protect this very valuable asset in Simcoe county. There's certainly a concern that too much water is being removed. Different speakers talked about plans they had to work with the Minister of the Environment to see additional rules or regulations that would monitor more closely the amount of water that is removed.

I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words this morning. I thank Mr Gilchrist for bringing forth this bill. I think it is something that deserves a lot of debate, on any moraine across the province or any significant area we have in the province. I know the general feeling of people in Ontario is that we want to have a clean, safe environment and a province that is able to develop properly over many generations.

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** I applaud the member for bringing this bill forward. I told him when he introduced it the last time that I would support this bill. As my colleague from Scarborough-Agincourt said, we are disappointed that the bill has been weakened dramatically. As you know, I have introduced three bills asking for the protection of the Oak Ridges moraine.

Fundamentally, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals believe there should be an immediate freeze on all development on the moraine until a plan is put in place. That is the fundamental difference; that's what my bill has. Then there would be a protective commission, essentially mirroring the Niagara Escarpment Commission, which has been a great success. I know that in this bill—it's interesting, and I applaud him for it—the member has put in a planning board that would be protective.

Again, as far as the bill goes, we are supportive. We'd like to see any initiative, Mr Speaker, because, as you know, up to this point, this government in its seventh year has done nothing but allow sprawl on the moraine. That's why we feel immediate protection is necessary.

If you look across the Oak Ridges moraine, there are threatened developments that are going to destroy this ecological masterpiece from Orangeville to Caledon East, Bolton, King township, Snowball, Richmond Hill, Lake Wilcox, Aurora, Queensville, Vandorf, Gormley, Muselman Lake, Ballantrae, Stouffville, Gan Eden, Goodwood and Halldimand township. From east to west across this beautiful bioregion, there is a threat of uncontrolled development. Mr Speaker, you can have development, but don't have it where there's prime farmland that is being paved over or where there are ecologically sensitive wetlands, nature preserves or water recharge areas.

On Monday, I guess, I went to a hearing of the Ontario Municipal Board, where one, lone person is taking on 10 development lawyers who are trying to pave over and develop the East Aurora wetlands complex. Ironically enough, that one person, David Tomlinson, is there by himself because the Ministry of Natural Resources will not enforce its own law that requires a 120-metre setback from a wetland. The developer wants to build houses right on the wetland and destroy this wetland. That's why we need a freeze. Up at the OMB right now, as we speak, there is no provincial ministry official helping David

Tomlinson, the local resident. That's why we need this freeze immediately.

1030

Look what's happening right now in the Duffins Creek area, Boxgrove. You're going to hear a lot more about Boxgrove in the weeks to come. That's by Brock Road and Duffins Creek on the edge of the Rouge River. Right now, this government, through the Ontario Realty Corp, is selling off prime agricultural land and selling off environmentally sensitive lands to developers as we speak. That should be frozen and halted immediately. The federal government donated hundreds of acres of land to extend the Rouge Valley Park. This government has two massive tracts of land near Boxgrove—the north Pickering lands, the agricultural preserve lands—that they are readying for development. That's why we need the freeze and we need the protections immediately.

This bill will take too long, because we've seen the record of the government, which essentially has looked the other way. In fact, Karen Clark of the Canadian Environmental Law Association categorically states, "This government has made 20 surgical hits that took all the legislative protection that would have saved the Oak Ridges moraine from the Planning Act, from the Environmental Assessment Act and from the Environmental Protection Act." That's what this government did. It basically, over the last six years, has surgically decimated protection for the moraine and other sensitive environmental lands like it. So its record is horrific.

It has changed the Planning Act, where developers or municipal councils don't even have to obey provincial planning law. All they have to do is basically look at it. There is no enforcement where developers have to even—they've weakened the provincial planning laws dramatically, as the Canadian Environmental Law Association has said.

That's why we have the threat to the moraine, because we have a government that's allowed the OMB to be the de facto planning arm of government. As you know, Mr Speaker, some people call it the Ontario development board. It just develops lands on sensitive areas, where lawyers and consultants are making a fortune at the expense of local residents. That's what this government has allowed. It has allowed the OMB to do its planning for it. That's why in Richmond Hill we are there at the OMB. That's why in Aurora we're at the OMB. In Uxbridge we're at the OMB. In King City, wherever you go, the OMB is doing the government's work. The OMB should not be doing the government's work. In fact, if you really want to do something significant, you would basically disallow private developers from extending urban boundaries into the Oak Ridges moraine and not allow them to appeal that to the OMB and not overrule the citizens and local councils. Instead, they are trying to extend urban boundaries all across the GTA, and they pay their big lawyers and consultants and they win at the OMB every time.

That's what would stop this development on the precious Oak Ridges moraine, but the government has sat

on its hands for six years now, going into seven, and has done nothing but basically promote sprawl. That's why in my bill and on the Liberal side, we have said that not only do we have to put in a freeze to protect this wonderful masterpiece from Cobourg to Caledon, but we should promote this area. Sometimes we're in too much of a hurry to stop and smell the roses, but if you go through the area, as I have, on foot, on bicycle, by car, by canoe, you can see there are beautiful places that need promotion from this government. Put it in the tourist guidebooks. Enhance ecotourism; enhance small business in the moraine. That's why the Liberals and my bill promote that.

For instance, you can go trout fishing in Duffins Creek. Promote that. You can walk the Ganaraska Trail. You can walk the Ganaraska forest. You can walk the Oak Ridges moraine trail. You can go through the Bruce Trail and see beautiful Port Perry on the edge of the moraine, a wonderful small community, or Uxbridge, which is being threatened by this government, which has a huge development threatening it. Beautiful Goodwood: visit the Secord Pet Cemetery in Goodwood, which is an amazing little niche there in the middle of the Goodwood forest. Visit the Pine Farms orchard in King City, where you can pick apples with your children. Stop and pick the apples in King City.

One of the most beautiful spots, I think, in southern Ontario is Belfountain. Belfountain is an amazing little village which houses the Caledon Ski Club. It is a spectacular spot on the moraine. I encourage people to walk up there, hike up there, ski in the wintertime. This government should be promoting these areas, should be protecting them and not allowing gravel pits across the moraine, not allowing roads to cut through this beautiful area.

This area, the Oak Ridges moraine, is not distant from us. We are all connected. Whether you live, as I live, at the bottom of the Don River or whether you live at the mouth of the Don, the source of the Humber or on the shores of Lake Ontario, the Oak Ridges moraine connects us all. That's why whether you live in Toronto or whether you live in Tottenham, this protection will save us all and save a legacy for our children, not only water but wildlife, and stop this promotion of sprawl for sprawl's sake.

Let growth take place, but let it take place within the rules. Right now, if you go from stem to stern, whether you go to Box Grove or whether you go to Belfountain, there are no provincial rules to protect farmland; there are no provincial rules to protect these beautiful parts of this province. That's why overwhelmingly people have told me they support my bill, they support my efforts, and they want this government to do something. So the true test of this bill will be whether this government gets this bill and puts it into some dark hole or whether it will put a freeze on development, and whether or not this government will enforce its own provincial laws.

We've been told before and we were promised last time that Ms Churley's bill and my bill would go

together with a government bill—a private member's bill—to protect the moraine. If these three bills go together to committee in this session, then we'll know the government wants to do something. But if this bill does not go together with our two bills, then we know the government is playing games with the moraine.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Further debate?

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** Well, well, well. We have a new bill here from Mr Gilchrist today on saving the Oak Ridges moraine. It's called the Ontario Natural Heritage Act, 2001.

You know, I'm happy to see it here. I'm happy to see he's presented another bill today. I am, Mr Gilchrist, and my party will be supporting you on this bill today, as we have in the past, and as you have, I acknowledge in this House, supported Shelley Martel's and my bill on the Oak Ridges moraine, as well as Mr Colle's.

But I have to tell you, through the Speaker, Mr Gilchrist, that I was given the impression there weren't changes to your bill. Now, I know you're downplaying the changes and in your mind you feel that they're not significant, but you have to understand that I feel the changes that you have made to this bill from the last bill are tremendously significant. I would imagine that although the save-the-Oak-Ridges-moraine groups out there will support the bill as well, because something's better than nothing—we need to get something on the books here and happening—the fact is that you took out main component, I believe, of your previous bill, which was the same as with Mr Colle's bill and my bill and Shelley Martel's bill: to freeze development on the Oak Ridges moraine. I wasn't happy about other pieces of your previous bill and this bill; I don't think it goes nearly far enough. But one of the strongest components in the bill was to freeze the development until we sort all this out. That is so critical, because all the time, every day, as we are here debating these issues over the past couple of years, what is happening in the Oak Ridges moraine? Development continues to go ahead. There's OMB hearing after OMB hearing. It's all taking place on a piecemeal basis where citizens' groups, people without money, are being forced to raise money that is impossible for them to raise, whereas the developers have all kinds of money to prove their case. They can go before this OMB, which, as we've seen by now, is pro-development, and make their case. I admit that there has been at least one, I believe, fairly good decision, but on the whole, this is the wrong way to go about planning such an environmentally sensitive area.

So of course we have to ask why this main component has been taken out of the bill. I know Mr Gilchrist will say, "Well, no, it's just been changed a little bit," even though the bill does not freeze portions of the moraine that are not areas of natural and scientific interest. Those are the only pieces now that he's talking about being frozen. It would permanently freeze development on the portions of the Oak Ridges moraine and other places in the province that are designated as "areas of natural and

scientific interest as defined in section 1 of the Conservation Land Act." That's fine, but that's just a small portion of the Oak Ridges moraine. In the meantime, development continues to happen. The proposals continue to come in.

**1040**

Let me tell you a little bit more about Mr Gilchrist's bill today. It would use the Oak Ridges moraine strategy, which was developed by the Ministry of Natural Resources under the NDP government and was completed in 1994. That was the basis for the Oak Ridges moraine plan. There was massive consultation on this and, yes, we spent a fair amount of money on it as well because we thought it was important to get this right. The public was invited to make submissions and then additional existing studies were commissioned that were relevant to the moraine plan, and a development plan, under the Ontario Planning and Development Act, would be required to be submitted to cabinet within one year of the passage of the bill.

This is what you have to understand: in Mr Gilchrist's bill, in consultation with the public—they would be invited to make submissions for existing studies on top of the existing studies that were done under our government after massive consultation. I admit that a bit more work needed to be done here, which is another reason we needed the freeze. After a plan was developed under the Ontario Planning and Development Act, that would be submitted to cabinet within one year of passage of the bill. Then cabinet would be able to—get this—pass the plan, amend it or drop it altogether. That's the reality of this bill.

Section 5 of the bill would prohibit any authority from allowing development on an area of natural and scientific interest, or on any other wetland with an area greater than two hectares, throughout the province. This would amount to a pretty broad prohibition. For example, the NDP legislation prohibits development on significant wetlands.

Let's see what else. The bill allows the municipality to impose development charges for parks, and prohibits a municipality from imposing development charges for proposals to redevelop commercial and industrial lands, unless the development charges are permitted by regulation. So there are some good pieces in the bill. Put that together and it's fairly progressive.

It limits OMB members to nine years on the board. I'm fine with that. It says that any appeal of an official plan amendment or zoning bylaw must be heard by a panel of at least two board members. I think that's a good idea.

I want to go into section 10 a little bit. It allows cabinet to overturn an OMB decision on an official plan or a zoning bylaw. This of course speaks to the growing frustration with the undemocratic nature of this particular board. I have mixed feelings about this. It was our government that took away the right to appeal to cabinet, and we did it for a couple of reasons. One was that if you have a really good, green Planning Act, then you don't

really need to have appeals to a cabinet. The rules we brought in were so comprehensive under the green Planning Act. That was the act that required municipalities, the province and the OMB to make decisions in a manner "consistent with" the provincial policy statement. What this government did, among other things, was they completely gutted the green Planning Act and made it more pro-development than it was before we changed it to be greener. It went back in time, pre-NDP time.

They changed the wording to say that they just had to have "regard for" the provincial planning statements. That's easy. You pick it up, take a look at it—"Yep, yep. Well, we had regard for this. Yes, we did. We looked at it and we rejected it, but we had regard for it." If it says it has to be "consistent with," there is no option. There are all kinds of other components of the green Planning Act, which was a result, may I remind people, of the Sewell commission. It went out across the province over about two years, consulting widely—broad consensus: green Planning Act. There were some disagreements, but it was a good act.

So if you've got a really strong Planning Act where the rules are very clear and the tools that municipalities and the OMB have are workable, but they have to work those tools within very consistent and strong planning rules, then you've got to question whether or not appeals should be made to cabinet.

Having been a cabinet member at one time and chairing the legislation and regulations committee, I got to see all the regulations and legislation that came through. We reviewed them first before we went to cabinet. I know that Mr Gilchrist agreed that not all kinds of small development appeals should go before the cabinet, but they used to, and the bigger ones as well. What our government did on a couple of occasions, when there were issues around environmentally sensitive land—we did it and there was quite a lot of controversy—in Grey-Owen Sound we declared a provincial interest since we couldn't get the municipality to do what needed to be done to freeze the development, to make everything stop until we worked out the best planning procedure for that area.

That is something that still can be done, which could be done in this case. Just like that they could declare a provincial interest and freeze development on the Oak Ridges moraine. That option was there, still is there, and we used it a couple of times. It makes people mad. The municipality—Mr Murdoch wasn't happy, but it was of significant interest that it had to be done.

Very complicated planning decisions would come before cabinet on an appeal, and we found we didn't have the expertise or the time to take a really good look, as members of the then OMB—it's a different kettle of fish altogether—at that time spent days, sometimes weeks, sometimes months looking at an issue and having the benefit of all of the scientific background and information. For cabinet to sit down and try to examine and make a decision as to whether something should be overturned or the OMB ruling upheld is not an easy thing

to do. So what it meant essentially was that it would turn into a political issue.

That is why I have concerns. On the one hand I think it's a good idea, particularly considering the makeup of the OMB now and some of the decisions that have been made. But on the other hand, given what we know about this government and its attitude toward development and the amount of money they have taken from developers for election campaigns, I would be really concerned if the OMB made some good decisions on the Oak Ridges moraine, and in one case they already have, to my knowledge: what if some good decisions are made and the developers don't like it and they go to this government, cabinet, which is pro-development, which received a lot of money from these developers, and not on the basis of scientific fact? It is really difficult—I would say impossible, having been there—for a cabinet to take the time, for staff to take the time, to examine the relevant issues to make these really monumental decisions to overturn a decision which in some cases took months and months of hearings to come to a conclusion, and it can also be dangerous.

I have mixed feelings about it and I think a discussion around that would be part of committee hearings. I think there need to be changes made to the OMB. I also think there need to be changes made to the Planning Act again.

My bill, that I just reintroduced, is before us again. It's the same bill that Shelley Martel—it was on the floor in the last session here, and of course died when the House prorogued. That bill had been sent to the general government committee for hearings and it could never get on. Mr Gilchrist has a different opinion than I do as to why it didn't get on. We both expressed those opinions publicly. I know, we all know, that the government did not want that bill to go to committee. They made a mistake in letting it go to general government, but it went to general government, and Mr Gilchrist says, "There are all these other bills before it and that's why they couldn't put it on." But the reality is that they kept it off the agenda because they didn't want it to go out to public hearings.

**1050**

In summary, I want to say something here and I want to say it very clearly. What I don't want to see here today—I know that the Liberals and my party are going to support this bill. What I don't want to see from the government members today is what they did with my Safe Drinking Water Act; that is, they supported the bill—I was very pleased about it, a very important bill, particularly given what's happening in the Oak Ridges moraine in terms of protecting our water and what happened in Walkerton—and then sent it to what's called the committee of the whole. It never happens; we all know that. It's kissing it goodbye. It's over; it's gone; it's never going to see the light of day again.

I don't want to see that happen here today. I hope very much—

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Well, help us. Work together with us.

**Ms Churley:** Oh, well, you can work the numbers out, can you?

I believe that may be the cynical move that will be made today, and I urge all of the Tory members—people will see through it this time. They're on to you, and you won't get away with it.

The question here today is, is this bill strong enough? The answer is no. If the question is whether we support it, the answer is yes. Yes, because it does do some good things and it gives us an opportunity to get it out to committee with my bill and Mr Colle's bill. Our bills have been debated here before. Yours has. Now it's watered down, but it has been debated.

*Interjection.*

**Ms Churley:** Well, it is watered down. It is. It's really too bad. But let's put them all out to committee. Let's do that and have a comprehensive discussion, not only on saving the Oak Ridges moraine but on a green Planning Act in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Further debate?

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton):** I'm very pleased to rise today in support of Bill 17 from the member for Scarborough East. It's called An Act to ensure responsible and acceptable development and to protect the natural heritage of the Province of Ontario.

Ontario's planning process provides the tools needed for the protection of the Oak Ridges moraine. Anyone who has any familiarity with the municipal process—and I was on council for two terms—understands that it's not a phenomenon where the provincial government is promoting sprawl. It's a fact that communities look after their own planning process and the growth in the population which is occurring, and there are a number of reasons.

Being from the riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton, I can tell you the city of Barrie, the town of Innisfil, Bradford and West Gwillimbury are growing. The reason they are growing is because of the population that's increasing, and also because they are attractive places to reside. One factor obviously for people is the price of the housing.

Certainly there are rules out there. The provincial government has rules; the municipal governments have rules.

What Mr Gilchrist is trying to accomplish is a balance. We're committed to the environmental integrity of the Oak Ridges moraine. This is reflected in the 1996 policy statement of the province and the 1991 Oak Ridges moraine guidelines. We believe, as a province, that the guidelines, policy and legislation already in place for our land use planning system provide the necessary protection. We're committed to the principle that municipal decision-making provides the appropriate local solutions in matters of land use planning. That's the way it has been for many, many years.

For the member opposite to speak about how things are in other areas and how their communities are being threatened—it's for the communities to look at those situations in terms of how they want to plan their communities. We don't need to be dictated to by rich landowners from Toronto in terms of what they want

outside of Toronto. It's a province-wide solution, and everyone should be a part of it.

I want to deal with the bill in itself. I think many of the people here viewing this saw the movie Forrest Gump and the statement by Tom Hanks where he's saying, "Life is like a box of chocolates." Mr Gilchrist's bill here, from a planning perspective, is, "Planning is like a box of chocolates." There are a number of things here that he's put out, and I think we have to look at it because they significantly bring more of a balance to how municipalities can deal with planning.

One of them is the changes that we're looking at from the Development Charges Act. This is very important for a community like the city of Barrie or the town of Innisfil. We are going to be removing the restriction on parkland acquisition as one of the municipal services for which the municipality can charge, and in its place make the acquisition of parkland mandatory. This is very fundamental in terms of preserving parkland and recreation within the community. The municipality will be able to deal with this from a Development Charges Act perspective.

Also, the Planning Act is going to be amended to restore the ability for citizens to appeal OMB—Ontario Municipal Board—decisions on significant planning matters, such as official plan amendments and rezoning applications, to the cabinet. This would provide the opportunity for cabinet to overturn or at least order a re-hearing on decisions which were clearly not reflective of the public sentiment.

That's what I think the member from Toronto opposite was concerned about in terms of the power that the OMB does have. He's right. They have tremendous power in terms of the processes for official plan amendments and rezoning applications. Those can be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board. Those are decisions made by the councils, but they're appealable and they become quite litigious, and sometimes they don't reflect what the public wants. This is a lever that Mr Gilchrist is putting in place to allow that public sentiment to come clearly through this process.

One other measure he's looking at is that the Planning Act would also be amended to add a three-year moratorium to all significant planning applications from the day the municipality adopts a new official plan. For the viewing audience, an official plan for a municipality is how that community wants to plan: certain areas they want to be commercial, certain areas they want to be industrial, certain areas they want to be residential, certain areas they want to be institutional, and certain areas they want to be environmentally protected. That's their blueprint for how they want their community to be.

Currently, every municipality is required to update its official plan every five years, but after spending millions of dollars on that planning exercise, a developer who disagrees with some aspect of the plan can apply for a change literally the day the plan is adopted. There's a lot of work, as the member from Simcoe North can attest in terms of the town of Oro-Medonte, that goes into that

planning. Why? Because that's how the community sentiment, from their elected representatives, wants that community to be. It is a very significant document.

This bill would ensure that official plans, once adopted, would carry much greater weight than is the case today, because the Planning Act would be amended to add a three-year moratorium that provides stability to the planning process. As I've said, every five years that official plan document has to be reviewed. So I think the bill puts a very good balance with respect to the municipal rights and the provincial perspective in terms of making sure the planning process remains responsive to growth but also brings decisions back to the public in terms of the municipal role.

I'm going to stop speaking at this point; I know other members want to speak. But I think this is a good start and Mr Gilchrist should be commended for the hard work.

**Mr O'Toole:** It is my pleasure to respectfully comment on Bill 17 by Mr Gilchrist from Scarborough East. I commend him for bringing forward what I consider an important initiative. I think the government and all sides should support it.

I also want to comment that the Honourable Frank Klees, the minister, has spoken widely in support of the moraine.

I know people on all sides of the House, not just in my riding of Durham, are very concerned. This is quite a comprehensive private member's bill, as the members present would know. I just want to read the preamble statement. It explains most of it.

"The bill deems the Oak Ridges moraine to be a development planning area under the Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994, and requires the minister to cause a development plan for the Oak Ridges moraine to be prepared. The minister is required to submit the proposed development plan to the Lieutenant Governor in Council for approval within one year of royal assent."

1100

It goes on to define quite clearly that "The minister is required to compile a list of studies or documents prepared by ... the government ... that updates or completes information gathered on the Oak Ridges moraine."

I think the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton has covered many of the prescriptive measures to ensure there's orderly, balanced planning in a very sensitive area.

Recognizing that a great part of this is in my riding of Durham, I also want to address the mayors in the area who need to be recognized and are supportive of this initiative, it's my understanding. That would be Mayor Gerri-Lynn O'Connor of Uxbridge; Mayor Doug Moffatt of Port Perry; Nancy Diamond, the mayor of the city of Oshawa; John Mutton of Clarington and Regional Chair Roger Anderson.

This has been a significant issue with respect to perhaps the Gan Eden project most importantly. What we're looking for is fair and reasonable uses of land. In fact, in a very few minutes, in the details of the bill it defines the

Oak Ridges moraine and, I would say, a similar characterization to the Niagara Escarpment. There's one section I would like to be on record. Under the development control portion, which is under section 5 of the bill, it says with respect to wetlands in southern Ontario that it would somehow develop a permit with respect to wetlands. That is a significant issue. I think there needs be further discussion.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Scarborough East has two minutes to reply.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I sincerely want to thank my colleagues from all three parties for their comments in response to Bill 17. I must say to both Mr Phillips and Ms Churley that I certainly understand the politics involved here. I'm glad to see that their response was a far less partisan approach than one might normally see in this Legislature on bills. But to suggest that this bill is watered down is a gross misstatement. In fact, unlike other bills that shall remain nameless but tabled by the other side, my bill makes it very clear that it is not at some point in the future that there must be a plan. Within 120 days there must be a plan that protects the whole moraine, and so the suggestion that there is no longer a freeze or that somehow that's relevant—the real fact is that anything that is environmentally defensible, scientifically defensible as worthy of protection, even in that first 120 days, will be protected.

I want to thank as well Minister Witmer, who went on the record last week as saying that our government does support the protection of the moraine and that we're going to consult. I look forward to being part of that consultation.

I want to thank folks like Jim Robb and his colleagues, who are from the Friends of the Rouge Watershed, who are with us here today—groups like that which have taken a stand in defending not just the Rouge but areas like the Rouge throughout the whole Oak Ridges moraine and the watersheds up there.

The province has led by example: 3,350 acres, a huge portion of that on the moraine, has been dedicated to the Rouge park. I'm confident we're going to keep adding land. In fact, I hope we get even more land in Markham added to the Rouge park, and I've made that appeal to Minister Tsubouchi and to his colleagues.

The bottom line here: it's not about politics, it's about protecting the environment. All members in this House have a vested interest. All of us should take our roles as stewards of Ontario's natural heritage very seriously. I'm sure you do, and I look forward to your support when this bill comes for a vote.

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm not certain that I heard the member for Eglinton-Lawrence accurately, but I wish at this point to simply state that I for one disapprove of his comments with regard to the Ontario Municipal Board, but more importantly, I make this point and I draw it to the attention of his leader whom I know will be—

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. That is not a point of order.

**Mr Guzzo:** Oh, I apologize.

## WORKFARE

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** I move that in the opinion of this House the Ministry of Community and Social Services must fulfill the Blueprint commitment to move forward with the expansion of the Ontario work-for-welfare initiative by having every ministry, government agency, board and commission take a number of workfare placements. As promised during the 1999 campaign, the work-for-welfare system should also be expanded by encouraging municipalities to undertake more workfare programs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Mr Maves has 10 minutes to make his presentation.

**Mr Maves:** I move this resolution today because one of the most important successes of this government since 1995 has been moving people from welfare to work. I remember in 1995, when I was deciding to run for office, that one of the most embarrassing things, I would say one of the saddest things about Ontario, this rich, great province, the economic engine of Canada for so many years, was that we had 1.3 million people on welfare. It was costing Ontario taxpayers about \$7 billion a year. Ontario had the highest number of people per capita on welfare in Canada. Approximately one in 12 people was on welfare. So we as a party then undertook in the 1995 campaign to do substantial reform of the welfare system.

It was a system whose original intent was to help people who maybe had lost employment, had been on unemployment insurance for a certain amount of time and still hadn't been able to find employment, who found their benefits exhausted and were now falling into welfare. The intent of the system was a measure of last resort. It always should have been a system that when you fell into this safety net—it really should have been a trampoline—it gave a little bit; it cushioned your fall and made you spring back up into the workforce. Over time, over the years, that was not at all what the system had become. The system had become a trap, a net in the sense that no one, once they got in the net, was getting out. That shocking figure of one in 12 people on welfare demonstrates that clearly.

We did a variety of things when we came into office and we campaigned quite clearly on them. We campaigned that at the time, in 1995, we had the richest welfare benefits of any province in Canada, actually about 35% higher than in any province in Canada. We campaigned on the fact that we were going to reduce those levels so that they were much more commensurate with working wage levels. But our welfare benefits, I must say, after we did those reductions, are still quite high: about 25% higher than the provincial average for single employable people; 13% higher for single parents and 10% higher for couples with children. So Ontario welfare benefits right now are still the most generous in the world. Also, we moved some people who are disabled and long-term-disabled who were going to be on welfare

or had been on welfare for several years. We said we would move them out of the welfare system and have their own system, and that's now known as the Ontario disability support program, ODSP. Those benefits are about 50% higher than the benefits paid to similar folks elsewhere in Canada. So it must be known that that was one of the changes we made.

The other one that we actively campaigned on was workfare. The people of Ontario were way ahead of the political pundits and the political elite here in Toronto who said you couldn't do workfare. The people of Ontario were way ahead of the politicians on this one and were demanding it. In fact, any kind of polling we did subsequently probably would show that 75% to 80% of the people of Ontario supported the idea of workfare, that someone on social assistance should go out and do some work in community agencies, perhaps a not-for-profit facility like a boys and girls club or a long-term-care facility, to volunteer, to do some work in there, maybe go into an agency and acquire some computer skills and so on. A vast majority, 75% to 80%, of the public of Ontario supported this, but governments never moved in that direction. We did.

**1110**

We introduced workfare and we asked the municipalities and the regional governments that deliver social assistance to implement workfare. Honestly, they were pretty slow on the uptake. That was largely because the idea of workfare was blocked by unions like CUPE that represent a lot of workers in the municipal sector. They were pretty slow on the uptake.

We did have some early successes, but it was some reforms that Minister Baird brought in in 1999 that prodded the municipalities: "Look, we'll set a target for you for a number of people who are on social assistance, who are in Ontario Works, who have to be in a community placement, a workfare placement. For every person that you are below that target, there is going to be a financial penalty, and for every person above that target there's a reward for the municipality." That was \$1,000 per placement.

In the first year of that program a lot of municipalities—I remember, even my own—were very far below the target where they should have had workfare placements. Once we brought in the program, in the very first year—last year I remember we were 46 out of 47 delivery agents in Ontario. That's where we ranked. We only had 22% of our welfare recipients in placements who were supposed to be in placements. At the time I did a press release and I said, "We have to do better. We've got to find more placements," because where municipalities were finding placements for people in Ontario Works in workfare placements, they were then moving into jobs. It was an extremely successful program.

I remember Minister Baird had binders of letters this thick in his office from people who said, "I didn't like workfare. I was on social assistance. I didn't appreciate you telling me that I had to go out and do some community work or get into a workfare placement. But once I

did it, it was terrific. It was the best thing that ever happened to me. I'm now working full-time. I feel better. I've got more contacts. I've got a full-time job." Great stories.

Places that were fulfilling the number of workfare placements that the minister had set a target for, that were placing people in full-time jobs and meeting these workfare placements, were getting money, \$1,000 per person above those placements.

In Niagara we were only at 22%. At the time, in my region there were a lot of people who said, "Don't pick on us. We're actually putting people in jobs, and placements aren't important." I said, "You know, you can do both." There were lots of other municipalities that were doing both successfully. Durham was doing very well. I think York was doing very well. Owen Sound was doing very well in both. I said, "You can do both."

Last year they only had 220 placements. In lighting a little fire under them, in establishing this reward system where they could achieve income for their municipality if they met their target, they have redoubled their efforts and now, this year, they're going to finish well above their target. They've gone from 200 placements to 1,300 or 1,400 placements. So it works, and it is a great system that has had great success.

We set targets for our own Ontario public service. In my opinion, those targets were quite modest. The targets for 2000-01 for the whole OPS were 750. Now we've overachieved those targets, with 1,077 placements in 2000-01. Some ministries, such as natural resources, made 706% of their target; Management Board Secretariat made 157%; Community and Social Services made 143%. But some failed to make their targets, and I insist to you that these are modest targets. For instance, education has a target of only 17 and they failed to meet that; they are at eight. Health and long-term care, a giant ministry: 113 placements was their target and they were at only 25.

This resolution asks the members of the Legislature to support and push now on the OPS and its boards, agencies and commissions to continue, to redouble their efforts like some of the municipalities did, to find placements for people, because placements lead to jobs.

Off the top of my head, the Niagara Parks Commission, for example, a commission of the Ministry of Tourism: I've talked to them several times and they are anxious now to get 25 or 30 placements within the Niagara Parks Commission. There are other parks commissions under the ministry that should be doing the same.

Long-term-care facilities: we're opening up 20,000 new long-term-care beds in Ontario. There are some municipalities which have worked with the long-term-care facilities and gotten people placements in those facilities. We can do hundreds and hundreds more in those types of placements.

Hospitals: there are all kinds of volunteer activities that go on in hospitals right now. It's a wonderful place

for placements, and that's where the Ministry of Health should be looking.

Education: as I said, they only have a target of 17, but they should really be looking at partnering with the school boards in finding all kinds of different placements, even things like lunch monitoring and recess monitoring and so on—

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.  
Further debate?

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** It's truly stunning to hear the member for Niagara Falls, six years after the government slashed social assistance rates by 22.7%, stand up here and talk about the generosity of the government in terms of the benefits that the most vulnerable people receive when we know about the extraordinary increase in terms of shelter costs, of home heating oil costs, of a variety of costs—food costs, which are extraordinary—and to have him stand up and still begin his speech with those remarks.

Let me begin with remarks by Andrew Mitchell, who was commenting on the budget yesterday. He's program director with the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto. He said in his response, "In his speech the minister said it was their duty as a government to help the most vulnerable, but his definition of vulnerable was conspicuous by its exclusion of people on social assistance." Indeed that's true. "A single mother with one child in Toronto is facing a rental market where the average rent is \$979, but she is still receiving the same \$511 for rent that she received in 1995." What more could be said about the difficulties?

Here we have a resolution that's absolutely unnecessary. We know the minister has made it very, very clear what he wants to do in terms of workfare, but what we don't have is an actual, real discussion related to workfare, whether it works and whether it actually is helpful to people. There's no real reason for this resolution, and I'd ask, what is the government afraid of? Why don't they shine the light on the dark corners of their phony workfare plan? The fact is, it is that. There is no proof, there is no accountability that it works, and there's no real sense of responsibility from this government.

The government refuses to acknowledge the truth on how workfare is actually working, and whether it is or not, or how its Ontario Works programs are affecting individuals and families in great need. When it comes to a meaningful evaluation of Ontario Works or workfare, all we get is a monthly body count. That's what they gauge everything on, a monthly body count, how many people they've kicked off welfare. There are no outcome evaluation studies, no thoughtful discussion or debate, no real attempt to measure the impact. It's the least you would expect from a government. There's only government spin.

The worst thing about the government's reforms to the welfare system has been its constant bombardment of misconceptions and ugly stereotypes about people on social assistance. If there's a shot to be made that will

further stigmatize the poor in our province, this government will do it.

Remember the Premier's comments that he thought pregnant single mothers should be denied a nutritional allowance because they'd spend it all drinking beer? An unbelievably offensive thing to say, something that I may say some municipalities at least dealt with by finding a way to provide those funds themselves.

How about former Minister Tsubouchi's comments about welfare recipients being able to live on this absolutely meagre diet and telling them to go and scour for dented cans of tuna? How about the current minister's implication that all welfare recipients are drug addicts? How can we forget the image of the minister himself scouring through a box of syringes and pouring them on the table?

This government has waged a constant battle against the poorest citizens of our province. If there has been any consistency in their policies, it has been that they have been punitive, vindictive, mean-spirited and designed ultimately to simply kick people off the system.

Look at the lack of adequacy in the welfare rates. Where is the cost-of-living adjustment? It should be at least there for people on social assistance. After six years at the reduced rate, the least they could do is a cost-of-living adjustment when we know the costs have increased extraordinarily. People are desperate. They're trying to rebuild their lives, but they're doing it without the resources to survive, and each individual story is so alarming.

What about the national child tax benefit? Why the clawback? The government simply claws back about \$140 million out of the hands of our poorest children.

What about the loss of children's educational funds in order to qualify for welfare?

What about the imposition of liens on those few property owners who may be forced to go on social assistance but actually have property? They put liens on their property in order to qualify for welfare.

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What about the cuts in support to the STEP program?

There's example after example. Behind every phony spin this government puts on their policy, there's an individual story of a personal struggle to survive and to live with dignity.

We never hear from this government about the woman in Sarnia, for example, who at the age of 54 was forced on to Ontario Works and into workfare because her husband became too sick to work and support her; or the mother in Barrie who remains stuck on welfare because the government will not provide her with the support she needs to care for her multi-disabled son, a disgraceful story; or, quite frankly, the workfare client in my riding, and there are many of them, who is struggling to simply make it to his workplace because the price of gasoline is so high. He lives 60 kilometres outside of Thunder Bay and has to go in every day, and it's a real struggle. The fact is, the supplement for his transportation is simply unbelievably inadequate.

We don't hear about how more families are relying on food banks. We don't hear that from this government at all, or how people are sort of disappearing off the system, never to be found again. Even when they pull their statistics, they won't acknowledge the fact that they are basing their statistics on the people they can find. There's a whole bunch of people they simply can't find. The fact is that there are hundreds of thousands of children going without proper nutritional needs being met. Those are the realities. We heard nothing about that in yesterday's budget.

Certainly I am voting against this resolution today. It does not do anything in any possible way to alleviate the situation. If I thought for one second that the government truly wanted to help people find the dignity of moving from welfare to work—as my colleague Ted McMeekin put it to me when we were talking about it, you have to have the right look in your eyes. The government members do not have the right look in their eyes. They spin the words out there, but it's still always based on the fact that people are somehow taking advantage of the system. There's no kindness or clarity or real belief. They don't have the right look in their eyes. They don't really, really care.

If indeed one felt that way, you'd do so. There are so many things they need to do if they really want to take this seriously. Look at proper daycare support. Look at proper tuition assistance. Look at counselling service that may be needed for people who are on social assistance. Certainly look at a decent living allowance for the people who are on social assistance.

The fact is, the government is afraid to shine light into the dark corners of this program. I have called, on behalf of my leader, Dalton McGuinty, for a social audit of Ontario Works—a responsible request, I believe, and something you'd think the government would be interested in doing. The fact is, they haven't done it. We have got to continue to press for that. Certainly, everybody who really, really cares about the massive changes that this government has gone through would call for that.

Let me also, if I may, read a lit bit, as I wrap up my remarks, from a constituent of mine, or certainly somebody from Thunder Bay, who wrote a letter to the editor. This is from Kim Woodbeck, just so that the member can perhaps understand the situation from her eyes. This is what she says:

"Applying for and being on welfare is one of the most degrading things that anyone ever has to do. It is made this way by the powers that be. It is not just a matter of answering a 'few' questions, and then picking up a mega-cheque.... There are a massive amount of questions to answer; every aspect of your life is scrutinized. About the only thing that you are not asked is the frequency of your sex life and your toilet habits, but at the rate that things are going this can't be far behind."

Pretty frightening words. The fact is, we've watched these massive changes in the system. We watch the government continue to stigmatize the poorest people in

our province. This is a resolution that does not deserve support from this House. This is a government that should be looking at their Ontario Works policy in a far greater fashion. I will not be supporting this resolution, and I trust that most people in this House will not be supporting it as well.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Let me begin by saying that it won't come as a surprise to anyone that New Democrats will not be supporting this resolution, because it seeks to expand what is really a flawed and punitive program into other workplaces with absolutely no guarantee that welfare is indeed leading to long-term, gainful employment for welfare recipients and no guarantee that the public sector and the private sector, because the government has extended welfare to the private sector, aren't in fact getting rid of, shedding, full-time employees in order to cash in on free labour of welfare recipients. There is no support for those parents who actually need adequate child care as part and parcel of taking on their placement. Finally, there is no guarantee, after the bribes that the government set out for municipalities, that this year municipalities are not going to be hit with a huge cost directly as a result of the call centres that this government has set up for Ontario Works.

Let me deal with each of these points in turn.

First, with respect to there being no guarantee that welfare is leading to gainful employment, I remember my former colleague from Algoma, Bud Wildman, standing in this House just after welfare had been implemented in Algoma to point out that the first welfare project in Algoma was one where welfare recipients were painting picnic tables during the summer. There is nothing long-term about that placement; it's not going to lead to long-term, gainful employment. The question is, how many other placements like that exist that welfare recipients are having to deal with?

I remember one of the first and probably very embarrassing—I use that word very specifically—welfare projects in my own community, in the same summer as the government was trying to ram through legislation to forbid welfare recipients from being part of trade unions. That project was re-greening work that used to be done by summer students, funded through the federal government and the former UIC. Those summer students would be put all around our community. They would be up on the rocks in our community spreading lime to try and deal with some of the acid in the soil, so that we could actually recapture some of the soil to grow something in our community. This is the legacy left us from two mining companies that used to roast their ore outdoors.

That was a federal program for 18-year-olds that had its funding from the federal government cut off, and the municipality then stuck welfare recipients into it—nothing gainful about that employment, nothing long-term about that employment. It was a quick fix to throw people into when some other money from some other level of government got cut off, and it was embarrassing.

I think it's interesting that the government so cleverly ties its welfare numbers into its numbers of how many people are coming off the social assistance rolls. Wouldn't it be interesting if the government actually tracked and made public what is really happening to those who are coming off the welfare rolls? Because I don't think welfare has much to do with those changes in numbers. I'd be interested in knowing how many of those people who left the welfare rolls actually left the province, or how many of those people who left the welfare rolls are actually now living in homeless shelters—whole families crowded into motels down on Kingston Road here in Toronto. I'd like the government to track how many of those people who left the welfare rolls are single moms with kids who actually returned to an abusive relationship because the money they were getting on social assistance was not enough to support their families.

It would be very interesting if the government undertook such tracking, because I think we would clearly see that many people leaving the welfare rolls are finding themselves in the three situations I just outlined, and that welfare has nothing—or very little—to do with people leaving the welfare rolls. It's interesting that that government is not making public that kind of tracking. I suspect they don't want to, because they would rather have people assume that people leaving welfare are actually benefiting from welfare, when there's no guarantee whatsoever that that's happening.

Wouldn't it be interesting as well if the government actually broke down the welfare programs and made public the following categories of welfare: the number of individuals who are actually involved in résumé writing; the number of individuals in welfare now who are actually involved in upgrading; the number of individuals who are in actual placements in our community; and finally, how many individuals in real placements actually got hired for full-time permanent work?

That would be a far more concrete and realistic evaluation of welfare, because I continue to believe that the bulk of people involved in welfare right now are in two categories: (1) in upgrading—they are not in work placements at all—and (2) in work placements but not placements that are going to lead to full-time permanent jobs, which is what the government claims this program was all about.

I didn't hear the parliamentary assistant talk about any of those categories. How many people actually involved in welfare now are in any of those categories? As I said earlier, I continue to believe the majority of people aren't on their way to full-time, permanent work. They're stuck somewhere in upgrading or they're stuck in a placement that will not lead to full-time work, like some of the placements I referred to earlier.

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A second concern is that there is no guarantee whatsoever that those private and public sector employers are not shedding or laying off or getting rid of their permanent employees in order to get free labour

from welfare clients. I listened last Thursday to the minister and his comments on mandatory drug and literacy testing, which was an appalling statement. He spoke of the government exceeding its target for welfare in the public sector by about 300 placements. I wonder if the minister is prepared to table in this House those positions that those welfare recipients are assuming at this time, because I suspect that if we had a chance along with OPSEU to take a look at those positions, we would find that many of those positions had had permanent, long-term employees who were laid off by this government when they were so busy getting rid of people in order to have money for the tax cuts, and that those positions are now being replaced by people on welfare.

I thought it was interesting that the parliamentary assistant talked about the Ministry of Natural Resources exceeding their target by 706%. Isn't it interesting that it's the Ministry of Natural Resources that so exceeded its welfare targets that had the biggest cut in staff under this government since this government was elected? The biggest cut in staff was at the Ministry of Natural Resources. Isn't it so convenient, such a coincidence, that it's the same ministry that has the highest level of welfare recipients? How many of those welfare recipients are taking jobs from people laid off by this government so this government could have savings for its tax cut?

I say that because we got a call as well last Wednesday from North Bay, from a public servant, to let us know that just the day before, people in her unit were asked to welcome a new employee who was a welfare recipient. Isn't it interesting that that new welfare recipient was taking the position of a staff person who had had permanent, full-time employment in that ministry and who was laid off two years ago by this government? That's what I am convinced is happening in our workplaces, that we have many people losing full-time employment because it's cheaper for the government, and it's certainly cheaper for the private sector, to get the free labour of welfare recipients. That is what's happening.

What's worse is that, because of this resolution the PA is promoting here today, the government sends a clear message to the private sector that it's OK to shed your employees, to get rid of them, to lay them off and replace them with welfare recipients. There's a real incentive for employers in the private sector to do that because they're not paying the wage costs for those individuals. As those individuals continue to receive their social assistance, there is virtually no cost to employers in the private sector to have them in their workplace. So what you set up is a really vicious cycle of welfare recipients being brought in, working for a period of time in a private sector place of employment, and being let go so the employer can turn around and start it all again.

That employer benefits from having free labour and driving his or her wage costs down. That's insidious, and that's the kind of program we have in place, because there's nothing to guarantee that's not happening. In fact the government, by replacing permanent staff in the

public sector, sends a message to the private sector that it's OK to do just that. I think that's exactly what they are doing.

Our third concern deals with child care, because there is a huge lack of support for parents who need child care if they have to participate in placements. We know, because KPMG did a study for this government in 1998, that the government would need to make a massive investment in child care to make workfare work. The reality is that between 1995 and 1998, this government cut regulated child care by 15%. The government is spending \$43 less per child per regulated space than they were in 1995. The government has also downloaded 20% of all the costs of child care on to municipalities. We know that any spaces that were created in the community came from full-fee-paying parents, not because this government was doing anything constructive, because this government was in the process of cutting child care through that whole period.

This leads to two problems in our communities with respect to workfare. You've got two pots of money that a municipality can access to deal with child care. You have a pot for subsidized spaces to help low-wage working parents who are trying to remain at work but need help with child care to do that. This government has capped its contributions to subsidies for working parents in our communities who need subsidized child care. You've got the scenario that the city of Toronto, for the third year in a row, has set aside \$3 million in its budget to try to reduce its subsidized spaces and this government refuses to do its 80%, so the waiting list in Toronto has now grown from 13,000 to 14,500.

You've got a second pot of money for child care. The government established about \$65 million for spaces for workfare recipients to access regulated child care. The problem is that when municipalities can't find any more of that \$65 million for an Ontario Works client, because that pot is so small, then the municipality turns to its other pot of subsidized money, the pot that's supposed to be for low-wage working parents who need some assistance in order to keep working and have their kids in child care.

You've got the scenario now where in many municipalities workfare recipients are going to the top of the subsidized waiting list ahead of other working parents who have been sitting, waiting for child care. There is nothing fair about that. The reason municipalities do this is because the government penalizes municipalities if they don't reach their target with respect to workfare placements. They are now in the process of doing whatever they can to get whomever they can into whatever kind of placement they can so they'll not be penalized by this government and lose money. The municipalities have been forced into this position of pitting OW clients against low-wage working families who have been on a waiting list for a subsidized space for a long time. There's nothing right about that.

In Welland my colleague Mr Kormos and I heard from a woman who was on a waiting list—600 people on the

waiting list for a subsidized space in Niagara. We had a young woman, Marnie McLean, who was working in a nursing home, not making very much money. She needed a subsidized space to ensure her kids had a safe place to go before and after school. Marnie McLean and other families in Niagara were clearly told, "If you were an Ontario Works client, you'd be at the top of the list like that and you'd probably get a subsidized space." Marnie McLean is not an OW client. She's a hard-working woman trying to look after her two kids by herself on \$300 a week.

Marnie McLean had to quit her job because she couldn't get access to a subsidized space. She would like to go on workfare, but now she's penalized because she quit her job so she can't even get that for three months. That's how ridiculous the system is. That's because this government did nothing to make sure there would be adequate child care. Nothing in the government's announcement last week, as they talked about extending workfare, talked about increased funding for welfare either.

We don't support this resolution. This whole thing has been flawed. It is punitive, and there's no guarantee people are getting real live jobs.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'm very pleased to be able to speak on the resolution of the member from Niagara Falls. The thrust of the resolution is to expand workfare placements in the public sector.

For the viewing public, I want to take a look at the principles of Ontario Works, the actual name of the workfare program which was first announced in 1995. It's an active employment program. It provides employment assistance to help people find and keep a job. While they are taking steps toward employment, they are also eligible for financial assistance. The costs of Ontario Works are shared by the province and municipalities.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services is responsible for setting policy and providing the majority of funding. Forty-seven municipalities and the DSSABs actually deliver the program. The caseworkers are municipal staff, and the clients work with municipalities, not the province. Municipalities are legally obligated to protect the clients' privacy. The ministry has regional offices to support municipalities in their delivery of the program and to ensure ministry accountability.

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The Ontario Works focus is on employment, not just on giving people cheques. Caseworkers are expected to help participants find work, and Ontario Works places expectations on people that they will help themselves. Participation in at least one employment activity is mandatory. Participants agree in a contract, called a participation agreement, to the employment activities they need to help find a job, and the program rules ensure there are consequences if people don't take the steps they agreed to in their participation agreement.

Obviously the focus is on finding a job. In terms of the province's economic growth since 1995, there has been

the creation of in excess of 822,000 net new jobs. We've had tremendous economic growth. It only makes sense that what we try to do through Ontario Works is allow people to get a job and participate.

This particular resolution is focused on the public sector, to increase the opportunity for community placements, to increase the opportunity to get experience and, the end objective, to get a job. Ontario Works provides a flexible range of practical services and supports to help participants while they're actively looking for a job. Community placements help participants build connections to the job market by providing them with current practical work experience, updated new job skills, improved confidence in their abilities, up-to-date job references and contact with potential future employers. The purpose of the employment placements is to move Ontario Works participants into jobs as quickly as possible.

Employment placement services include hiring assistance, follow-up human resources services to keep people employed, support for employers who provide on-the-job training and job coaching. Through the employment placements, participants are hired by the employer and placed directly on the employer's payroll, and participants receive the going wage for that position.

As a part of the program, Ontario Works takes the fundamental principle that everyone in the program can eventually become employed, that no one is permanently unemployable. Ontario Works is about helping people find the shortest route to employment, although the route will vary for different people. Ontario Works provides a generous range of supports backed up by a \$180-million investment in employment assistance funding.

How do the community placements work? Only non-profit agencies can sponsor community placements. Community placements are with agencies that need extra help, ie, new projects, special events providing new services to agency clients. Community placements cannot displace paid work. Participants are matched to placements based on their ability, training needs and personal interests.

The emphasis is on community placements, and they are a key component of Ontario Works. You can't get a job without experience, and you can't get experience without a job: that's the vicious cycle. Placements are invaluable for people who have been out of the workforce for a long time, people with no work experience and people with multiple employment barriers. Placements give people a chance to learn skills, build their confidence, get real work experience and make contacts. Placements also give participants a chance to give something back to the community while they're receiving assistance. The feedback from participants, agencies and communities on the benefits of placements has been very positive.

In order to speed up the development of new placements, in November 1999 the province implemented the welfare-to-work action plan, which set targets for municipalities starting from 15% of the caseload in a

placement for the year 1999-2000 and rising to 30% in the year 2001-02; provided increased funding for municipalities that exceeded the targets—\$1,000 for each placement over the target for each of the three years—warned the funding would be reduced for municipalities that did not meet the targets, and introduced the innovation fund for new placement projects. The province is building on its success, actively promoting and marketing best practices and sharing successful strategies with the municipalities.

I have explained the focus of Ontario Works. The purpose of the resolution is to expand those placements in the municipalities and the public sector. What this is saying is that the commitment of this government, through the Ministry of Community and Social Services, with the expansion of the Ontario work-for-welfare initiative, is having every ministry and government agency, board and commission take a number of welfare placements. As promised during the last election, the work-for-welfare system should also be expanded by encouraging municipalities to undertake more welfare programs. So the principles of providing assistance to get a job and of making sure of the process in terms of community placements, which is the key focus of the program, are something this resolution is dealing with. I support that.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I'm pleased to join the debate here today. What we see here today is part of an ongoing plan by this government, and not only from when they got elected. As we go back historically to look at the Mike Harris record in this area and we look at the Premier, then leader of the third party, six months or a year before the election, we all remember vividly the scene of parading this woman out in front of a media studio and saying she would be better off today in Ontario if she quit her \$40,000-a-year job and went on welfare.

They paraded this, front-page news all over the province, except the premise was wrong. You will remember that a day later every reputable commission of social services in Ontario said, "This is all wrong. Mr Harris has his facts wrong. This is inaccurate. It's not the case." That sort of set the tone for this government's obsession with attacking the poor in Ontario.

The first thing they did when they took office was to cut benefits by 21%. These folks who were living high on the hog on welfare were way too wealthy in Mike Harris's Ontario, "so we're going to cut their benefits by 21%." Then they proceeded to bring in welfare, which is nothing more than a public relations scam by the government of Ontario. Frankly, what welfare had was the same programs the municipalities were running all along. The provisions of being kicked off welfare if you didn't co-operate were already in the welfare act for 20 years in this province.

It became a nice, chest-pounding, Republican, public relations affair by the government of Ontario, saying, "Look how tough we're getting. We can prove it. Mike Harris can be so tough. If you rip off the welfare system,

if you're on welfare, if you just happen to be poor, we're going to nail you to the wall. But if you're a corporation in this province or if you're a business and you rip off Revenue Canada or you rip off the GST or PST, you know what? It's OK. It's a problem, but don't worry about it. We'll overlook that."

The double standard was applied right from the beginning. We had the snitch line. We had the 21%. We said, "You're overpaid." Then we said to welfare recipients, "You're all frauds and so we're going to bring in a snitch line." Then we said, "Not only are you all overpaid frauds, you're also all lazy, so we're going to bring in welfare and force you to do this." Then, beyond that, we said, "Not only are you overpaid, a fraud and lazy, you're all addicted to drugs."

I remember what I believe to be the most disgraceful performance in a press conference by a minister in the province of Ontario when the minister rolled out a box of syringes at a press conference with a backdrop of someone behind him shooting up to suggest to Ontarians that, if you're on welfare, you spend your money on drugs and you spend your money on shooting up your arm. What a disgraceful, embarrassing moment in the history of this province, condoned by the Premier, condoned by the cabinet and condoned by the backbenchers.

1150

People smile. I think what you did was disgraceful. It was a disgrace to every Ontarian that you believe you represent welfare recipients by bringing out a box of syringes and saying, "You're all addicted to drugs." That is the history of this province, without one study or shred of evidence to ever suggest that welfare recipients have any more addiction problems than anyone else in the general population. But that's the mindset of this government, and frankly that's the mindset that drives this resolution that's in front of us today.

Now we're going to expand this into the public sector. Now we're going to replace professionals, high-paid, well-trained individuals, with free labour for the government of Ontario, for the ministries. We're now going to say, as the government continues to cut back, "We can make up for it? We'll just put these welfare recipients to work for a while on the theory that it's going to help them."

These same welfare recipients, as other members have suggested, once they get into the job force, can't get daycare. I had two constituents in my office last week, two single women, who started a job and realized they could not access safe daycare for their kids. The jobs don't pay a lot of money. They can't afford to pay daycare, and if they want to line up to get subsidized, affordable, safe daycare in Hamilton, good luck. "Wait a year or two and maybe we'll get around to you."

If this government were really concerned about helping the needy, they would have addressed the daycare issue, and they would have addressed the housing issue and the crisis in this province. But do you know what? That doesn't get you those cheap, sleazy, political points that beating up on the poor does. It's just push that

button. You're down in the polls. "What do we do? Well, let's see. Let's beat up on welfare recipients this week. That'll help us a little bit in the polls. That's a good, hot button. Our polling told us that. Our focus group told us that. Gee, we're down in the polls again. Let's go after the teachers next week because that's another good, hot button."

Instead of playing hot-button politics with people whose only crime is being poor, you should look at some real alternatives and real programs. You cut benefits six years ago. In the greatest economic boom this province has seen, this government did not have the courage to put a hand out and help welfare recipients, to say, "We cut you all by 21%, but we think that was unreasonable and unfair. We're going to make up a little bit of it, at least deal with the inflation level." No, in six years you missed a golden opportunity there. In six years you have not touched those benefits you cut by 21%. In six years you've not introduced one new meaningful program to help people on welfare. In six years you've not added one new daycare space to help people get off welfare and into the workforce. Once they're out working, they're out of luck. That is not welfare reform.

This government doesn't care. It's that simple. Yesterday's budget showed that. This government couldn't care less about the needy and the poor in this province. They're a great button to exploit. They're great people to kick and beat up. Mike Harris pounds his chest. He's such a tough guy when he takes on welfare recipients. But he rolls over every time the corporate friends come out for a handout.

It's OK if you're looking for a grant to run your golf tournament and make money. That's OK, because Mike Harris is there. If you're a corporation that benefited by \$2.2 billion in yesterday's budget, that's OK, because that's Mike Harris's friends. But if you happen to be poor and needy or a single mum or are out of work in this province, you don't get a hand up; you get the back of the hand from this Premier and this cabinet.

It is nothing more than another mean-spirited, nasty, unnecessary attack by a mean-spirited, nasty government that doesn't understand the plight of the poor, doesn't care about the poor in Ontario, and seeks only to exploit and use poor people in this province. You should be ashamed of yourselves for what you have done. It is a disgraceful mark in the history of the province, what you have done to people on welfare in the last six years in Ontario.

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** I'm pleased to be speaking on this resolution this morning. I want to begin by responding to the member from Hamilton East. I'm actually very proud of what this government has done, very proud that this government is helping welfare recipients find jobs and gain dignity.

I want to thank the member from Niagara Falls and congratulate him for bringing this resolution forward. As parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services, I believe this is definitely an area where we should be moving forward. The member from Nickel

Belt, in her comments, referred to the member for Niagara Falls as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services. He is in fact now the parliamentary assistant to health. I'm filling his shoes in community and social services, and he's done an excellent job in that ministry. I think that's part of the reason he brought forward this resolution at this point in time, because he was in the ministry. He saw the benefits of this program.

In 1995, 1.3 million Ontarians were on welfare. That is more than one out of every 10 people. I believe no one wants to be on welfare. Some who are ineligible take advantage of welfare benefits, but the majority of people, I believe, want to find a job.

Welfare should be a bridge to get over a difficult period of time in one's life to be able to find a job in the future. We feel that we need to give the recipients the tools they need to escape the welfare trap. They need to regain the confidence and the dignity that having a job brings to most people.

We believe in Ontarians, we believe in the confidence of Ontarians, and we believe in giving people a hand up. I would ask, what is standing between recipients of social assistance and a job? There are several things that are standing in between. As a government, we want to assist recipients in moving into a job. Some of the initiatives brought forward by our minister are putting together literacy and numeracy skills programs, because it's important that people learn the tools needed in order to gain employment.

It's important that people are not dependent on alcohol or drugs so that when they find a job they will be able to retain it and be successful and gain confidence and dignity. They also need up-to-date skills, training for skills that are needed today in the jobs that are available for them today. This resolution from the member for Niagara Falls is an excellent place to start.

In 1995, the Common Sense Revolution contained a commitment to revolutionizing the way welfare operates in Ontario. Our Blueprint in 1999 reaffirmed our commitment to a system of social assistance that emphasizes skills and ensures that welfare is a temporary state between periods of employment.

We recognize it's hard to get a job without having up-to-date skills. We recognize it's hard to get a job without references. So helping people into jobs will gain them the necessary skills they need and gain them the references they need. It's hard to find a job if you don't have confidence in yourself. For those on welfare, working in workfare will gain the confidence they need to be able to continue to keep a job.

I want to talk about some of the successes in York region. My riding, Thornhill, is in York region. York region placements were almost three times the minimum provincial target. With the incentive program of \$1,000 per placement above the target, York region was granted \$962,000 to reinvest in valuable community services. I'm proud of the work that is done in York region. Between April 1, 2000, and January 31, 2001, a period of only 10

months, the target of 47,778 placements had already been achieved. Over 578,000 people have left the welfare rolls since 1995.

I want to quote a *Globe and Mail* article by John Ibbotson that talks about the opposition's view. Ibbotson said, "The Liberals and NDP can claim to their heart's content that the Tories are heartless and cruel, but they can't deny that under their governments, welfare caseloads exploded, while the programs they created to wean people off state dependency utterly failed."

"The Tories, by cutting back benefits and forcing recipients to make at least a credible stab at finding a job, have halved the rolls in six years. Does anyone believe either of the other two parties would have done better?"

On this side of the House, we don't believe that they would have been able to accomplish half as much as this government has accomplished.

On behalf of the Minister of Community and Social Services, as his PA, I would like to say that we firmly support this resolution. It's consistent with our Blueprint and I will be pleased to vote in favour of it.

**1200**

**Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** I just want to add a few words on this debate and say to my colleagues across the way, when I listen to their debate and to their arguments about why they don't support welfare, I am absolutely baffled, particularly by the Liberals who, as I recall, in one of their election campaigns referred to welfare under the title, "Mandatory Opportunity: maybe we will support it, maybe we won't." What I find so interesting is that both the Liberals and the NDP, when it comes to talking about welfare and helping those most in need in this province, absolutely give up.

We all hire summer students; we take on interns; we do everything we can to give people opportunities for workplace experience. There is absolutely no substitute for this anywhere. I am absolutely baffled that you would speak against the idea of giving people most in need an opportunity to benefit themselves and to better themselves and their families. I can't imagine you're going to speak against this.

**The Acting Speaker:** The mover of the motion has two minutes to reply.

**Mr Maves:** I thank everyone in the Legislature today for participating in the debate. I'm still astonished, after all the success this program has had to date and the welfare reforms we've brought in to date have had, that the opposition is still opposed to it. The opposition is proud of their record of putting 1.3 million Ontarians on to the welfare rolls. We're proud that we've moved 580,000 people from welfare to work.

Workfare is an opportunity. There are all kinds of programs. For instance, one program has an employment initiative and partnership with a local training agency and private sector employers in the hospitality industry. Participants take a four-week training course, which involves one week of classroom training at the Ontario Works office, one week of technical training on-site at a

hotel in small groups, the third week involves technical training at the individual hotels by experienced housekeeping staff, and in the fourth week employment starts. The pilot program has involved 20 Ontario Works participants thus far. Participants have completed the first week of training. The consortium has a commitment to employ the participants who successfully complete the training. The starting wages are \$9.26.

The point is, folks, that every workfare placement, as the member from Guelph said, is an opportunity. Opening up a larger number of placements is increasing the number of opportunities for people on welfare. Why the Liberals and the NDP want to continue to deny opportunities to people on welfare is beyond the understanding of most Ontarians. Their position on this is purely political, and has been from the beginning. They're putting partisan politics above the best interests of those Ontarians who most need the hand up. That is offered by workfare and community placement. We refuse to do that and we continue to move forward with more placements in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** The time provided for private members' business has expired.

**ONTARIO NATURAL  
HERITAGE ACT, 2001**  
**LOI DE 2001**  
**SUR LE PATRIMOINE NATUREL**  
**DE L'ONTARIO**

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** We will deal first with ballot item number 5 standing in the name of Mr Gilchrist.

Mr Gilchrist has moved second reading of Bill 17. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. It is carried.

Pursuant to standing order 96, the bill stands referred to the committee of the whole.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I didn't hear what you said. I apologize.

**The Acting Speaker:** I said that pursuant to standing order 96, the bill stands referred to the committee of the whole.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Any member that—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Toronto-Danforth will take—

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** On a point of order, Speaker—

**The Acting Speaker:** No. The member for Toronto-Danforth will withdraw those remarks.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** What remarks? We just went through a hoax this morning. He won't send it to a committee.

**Interjection:** When it goes to committee of the whole, nothing will happen anyway.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Kingston and the Islands, come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Oak Ridges will come to order.

I do not intend to—

**Mr Colle:** A point of order?

**The Acting Speaker:** No. When there are two of us standing, one of us is out of order, and it's not me.

I want you to be very sure about this: I am going to start naming members right away. I have asked, and I'll give the member for Toronto-Danforth one more opportunity to withdraw the remarks.

**Ms Churley:** I certainly will not withdraw those remarks. He is a fraud. This was a hoax this morning.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Toronto-Danforth, Mrs Churley, is named.

*Ms Churley was escorted from the chamber.*

**Mr Colle:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: by moving this morning's proceeding to committee of the whole, the government has basically perpetrated a fraud on this Legislature. They have not allowed us to debate this bill. They are perpetrating a hoax.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Bring yourselves to order.

First of all, that is not a point of order. I am here only at your insistence, and I go by the standing orders. The standing orders are quite clear.

The second point is that only the person who moved the bill could make a motion to put it into some other committee.

**Mr Colle:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to move unanimous consent that this bill proceed through second and third readings. By unanimous consent you could—

**The Acting Speaker:** I think the member is asking for unanimous consent, rather than moving it. Is there consent? There is not consent.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Colle:** It's a phony bill. It's a hoax. You're a fraud.

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the member for Eglinton-Lawrence to withdraw those remarks.

**Mr Colle:** I will not withdraw that. This has been the second time that members perpetrated a fraud—

**The Acting Speaker:** I name the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, Mr Colle.

*Mr Colle was escorted from the chamber.*

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Earlier, when the request was made for this to go to committee of the whole, was there not a request for a vote on that, or at least a voice vote to report to committee of the whole? I don't think that occurred.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order, but because there seems to be a bit of problem, I would like to explain that standing order 96 says that is what will happen.

### WORKFARE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 6, standing in the name of Mr Maves. Mr Maves has moved private member's notice of motion number 1. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1211 to 1216.*

**The Acting Speaker:** All those in favour will please rise.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hastings, John	Sampson, Rob
Baird, John R.	Jackson, Cameron	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Brenda	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.	Tumblud, David
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gill, Raminder	Mushinski, Marilyn	Wilson, Jim
Guzzo, Garry J.	O'Toole, John	Wood, Bob
Hardeman, Émie	Runciman, Robert W.	Young, David

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed will please stand.

#### Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Duncan, Dwight	Levac, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Gerretsen, John	Marchese, Rosario
Bisson, Gilles	Gravelle, Michael	Marcel, Shelley
Boyer, Claudette	Hampton, Howard	McLeod, Lyn
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Bryant, Michael	Kormos, Peter	Phillips, Gerry
Cordiano, Joseph	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Di Cocco, Caroline	Lankin, Frances	Smitherman, George

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 33; the nays are 24.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

All matters relating to private members' business having been completed, I do now leave the chair and the House resumes at 1:30.

*The House recessed from 1219 to 1330.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### HUMBER RIVER REGIONAL HOSPITAL

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston):** In 1997, the Harris government decided to close North-

western General Hospital in my riding, but when they closed it, they forgot to make certain that the health care services in my community were still protected.

Since 1997, my community of York South-Weston has been feeling the effects of that hospital closure. We are in a crisis situation. We are a severely underserviced area in terms of health care. Not only do we lack health services in general, but our Humber River Regional Hospital has the dubious distinction of being on critical bypass more than any other Toronto area hospital. More than anywhere else in this city, the people of my riding are without local emergency services. This cannot continue. Something has to be done. Health care services in York South-Weston have been ignored for far too long.

Recently, the Humber River Regional Hospital put forward a proposal to restructure health services in my community. The centrepiece of their proposal is the building of a new superhospital. This proposal is still being investigated and discussed.

I will support any plan that restores the health services our community desperately needs, but let me be very clear. I will not support a plan that leads to the further reduction in services in my community or a plan that starves our community of the health care services it needs now.

I will also not support a process that restructures Humber River Regional Hospital without community input. Humber River Regional Hospital is a community hospital. Our community deserves better than this and they deserve to have a say.

### JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** I rise before you today to speak about a subject that is of deep concern to my constituents of Scarborough Centre and myself, and it's that concern of criminal justice.

On Tuesday, April 18, 2000, I introduced a controversial private member's bill that was called the Judicial Accountability Act. The bill required local justices to keep records of their sentences for the Attorney General to present to this House. The bill also outlined that the Legislature may recommend to the Governor in Council of Canada as to who should be appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Politicians need to be held accountable, but we're not the only ones who effect change in the lives of the people of Ontario. The legal community must understand that they too need to be held accountable for the decisions they make.

In an article in the *Globe and Mail* on Wednesday, April 18, 2001, Attorney General David Young stated, "There are a lot of things that we do well in terms of law and order." I agree with his observation. The Mike Harris government has done much to protect all Ontarians, but we must not be afraid of making changes to help protect our neighbourhoods in Scarborough Centre and all across the province, unlike Dalton McGuinty and his federal cousins in Ottawa who continue to flip-flop and waffle.

on important law-and-order issues. Quite frankly, in my opinion, the Liberals just don't get it.

### BUDGET

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Although yesterday's budget succeeded in maintaining the ongoing corporate love affair between Mike Harris and his very select group of wealthy friends, it was a slap in the face for northerners.

Once again, this government has turned its back on the people living north of Parry Sound. Once again, Mike Harris refuses to increase the northern health travel grant and treat northern cancer patients like southern cancer patients. Once again, there was no mention of increased funding for capital construction or equipment costs for northern hospitals, like the Sudbury Regional Hospital. Once again, there is no commitment to an economic diversification strategy for northern Ontario.

But most shocking in yesterday's budget was the reality that this government has not funded the northern medical school by one cent, but they had \$60 million for a new university in Durham. Most frightening is the fact that the government has not committed one penny to physician recruitment and retention strategies in northern Ontario.

Perhaps Mike Harris should talk to the 40,000 people in Sudbury who do not have a doctor, perhaps he should talk to the 40,000 in Thunder Bay who don't have a family doctor or perhaps he should talk to the 8,000 in his own riding of North Bay who don't have a doctor before he jumps in bed with his rich corporate friends and gives them grotesque tax breaks that are 25% lower than anywhere else in the United States.

The reality is that this is a payback for Harris's wealthy corporate friends and a slap in the face to people living in northern Ontario.

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** At a time when people are expecting facts and plain talk in health care, the opposition Liberals are offering spin and numbers that are not only fuzzy but downright laughable and irresponsible. Last week the member for Parkdale-High Park suggested that most of the improvements in health care over the last few years have been paid for by—guess who?—the federal government.

First of all, as every Ontarian now knows, Ontario pays for 86% of its health care costs; the federal Liberals just 14 cents out of each dollar. Any extra dollar coming from Ottawa over the past few years has been not only new money but a partial restoration of the transfers the Chrétien Liberals have slashed in the first place. Giving the federal Liberals credit for health care funding is like giving an arsonist credit for coming back to the fire with a bucket of water. Let's not forget that those dollars never would come back to the people of Ontario,

were it not for the continued and persistent demands of Mike Harris and his caucus.

Unfortunately, the opposition Liberals did not support Premier Harris in his attempts to restore funding. The opposition Liberals claim that they are not joined at the hip with the federal Liberals, just cousins. The citizens of our province can count on this government for responsibility and accountability. Surely the opposition can be responsible in providing some accuracy in the facts they present to the public.

### HERB CARNEGIE

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'd like to say a few words about an outstanding Canadian, Herb Carnegie. I was pleased, along with over 1,000 people, to attend a ceremony where the North York Centennial Centre was renamed the Herbert H. Carnegie Centennial Centre. Herb, in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s was an outstanding hockey player here in Canada, as you would probably be aware, Mr Speaker.

Many who played with him believed he clearly should have been in the NHL. But he is black. There were many around at that time who felt that the reason he didn't make it to the NHL was because of his colour. In spite of that, he went on to be an extremely successful business person. He started, I think, Canada's first hockey school. He was senior champ in golf a couple of times for Canada. But his most important contribution perhaps was that he started something called Future Aces, which is a program that ensures a code of positive values for young people. He has raised well over \$200,000 to provide funding for them.

He is a terrific role model for all of us but he is someone who I believe should be in the hall of fame. There is a program underway now to encourage the hall of fame to accept him, and I would encourage all of us to support that. Those who would like to, can get the petitions from the community partnerships at 416-395-6475. This is an outstanding Canadian. I think all of us would be proud to have him in the Hockey Hall of Fame.

### OAK RIDGES MORaine

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Today members clearly witnessed how little this Conservative government cares about protecting the Oak Ridges moraine. In private members' hour this morning, members debated Bill 79, a bill put forward by the Conservative member for Scarborough East. While not nearly as strong as our NDP Bill 29, which freezes development on the Oak Ridges moraine until a policy statement is in place to deal with planning, and amend the Planning Act to allow for greater protection of natural areas in Ontario, my colleague Marilyn Churley, MPP for Toronto-Danforth, spoke in favour of Mr Gilchrist's bill in the hope that it would pass second reading and be sent to a legislative committee for full public hearings on this matter.

This bill is not going to a legislative committee after all and there won't be full public hearings. The member for Scarborough East, Mr Gilchrist, is directly responsible for that. When it was time for him to ask for his bill to be sent to a legislative committee for full hearings and a full review, the member instead specifically chose to send his bill to committee of the whole, where it will never be seen, called or dealt with again.

The member for Scarborough East had it in his power to have his bill dealt with. His decision to deep-six his own bill must clearly be seen as a betrayal of all those people who care about the Oak Ridges moraine and were led to believe the member was serious in trying to protect it. To all those who care about the moraine, I hope you understand how fully you have been betrayed. This government and the member for Scarborough East do not care one whit about protecting the Oak Ridges moraine. We saw proof of that this morning.

1340

#### LARISSA VINGILIS-JAREMKO

**Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe):** I rise today to explain an accomplishment of one of my constituents. Her name is Larissa Vingilis-Jaremko, and she is a student at Sir Wilfrid Laurier school in London.

She has been awarded the outstanding award from the TD Canada Trust Scholarship for Outstanding Community Leadership. She is one of 20 Canadians to have been awarded such an honour in 2001, and one of only seven high school students from Ontario who have won this award. On Tuesday, May 8, she was in Ottawa to accept this honour, a scholarship with a value of up to \$50,000.

I am proud to stand in the Legislature today to recognize this outstanding achievement and congratulate Larissa for her extraordinary efforts. She is a role model for her peers. She has certainly displayed leadership to her classmates, friends and teachers.

It is important that we all recognize the efforts of young teenagers, as they will form the future of this great province. It is also important to recognize the generous donation on behalf of TD Canada Trust in offering these scholarships to students across Canada.

I am proud to have a future leader in my riding receive this prestigious award. I know that in Ontario the Harris government is creating the conditions for people to succeed. I am proud to stand in the Legislature today to tell of this success story.

I ask that all members of the Legislature join me in congratulating Larissa Vingilis-Jaremko on her significant achievement.

#### BUDGET

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** I have in my hand the 2001 Ontario provincial budget. Rarely if ever in my experience have I had a public document that was so much about conferring private benefit. That in this year of sharply reduced economic

growth this province, this government, is about to, under these circumstances of lower growth and reduced revenues, confer a multi-billion-dollar corporate tax benefit so that our corporate tax rate will be lower than Mississippi and Alabama is unbelievable to me. Particularly when the people of the Ottawa Valley tell me that what they want is more public investment in home care, in their hospitals, in upgrades to their water and sewage treatment facilities, it is, to me at least as a long-time member of this Legislature, an example of government with simply wrong-headed priorities.

I see in the budget that we're going to privatize the ownership of the Province of Ontario Savings Office—no surprise, I suppose, since two years we privatized the confidential records of that provincially owned bank.

But my biggest concern is the truly revolutionary departure in this budget about funding private schools. The member from Waterloo North and I particularly, with our friend from Thunder Bay, know precisely how incredibly dangerous and radical is this policy. And if there's anybody in this House who thinks that this program and funding are anything like what is being suggested in this budget, you're dreaming in Technicolor. This is an enormously dangerous departure that, among other things, is going to have terrible impacts on the public school system and is going to cost vastly more money than the \$300 million you were talking about in yesterday's budget.

#### BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** This past weekend I was very honoured to attend a memorial service in Peterborough for the Battle of the Atlantic.

In 1939, Canada possessed only a few dozen Canadian-registered merchant ships, a single flotilla of destroyers and a single squadron of modern military flying boats. No one would have predicted that from this tiny beginning Canada's forces would go on to play a large and significant part in the Atlantic war, and that the Canadian merchant marine would carry cargoes around the world.

Bridging the Atlantic was the key to strategic supply, and it was in maintaining the Atlantic lifeline that Canadian naval and air personnel played an increasingly vital role.

To transport safely the vast amounts of goods and troops that were needed, ship movements had to be organized and controlled. In August 1939, Canadian-registered merchant ships and ships in Canadian ports passed from the control of their owners into the control of the Royal Canadian Navy, the RCN, which would determine routes and departures. Shipping on the more important and vulnerable routes was placed in convoy as the best means to regulate traffic and provide protection from both sea and air.

Escort work would remain the RCN's chief responsibility for the duration of the war. It was onerous and dangerous work, and Canadians shared in the worst

hardship experienced in the war at sea, the Battle of the Atlantic. Thank you, veterans, for your past and ongoing commitment to our country.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### CREUTZFELDT-JAKOB DISEASE

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Yesterday I advised the Legislature about the potential Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease situation at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital in Windsor. I can report to this House that ministry staff have been in contact with the medical officer of health of the Windsor-Essex county health unit, the CEO of Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital and Health Canada.

We have learned from the hospital that some medical instruments are shared with three other institutions on a routine basis. These hospitals are the Windsor Regional Hospital, the London Health Sciences Centre and St Joseph's Health Centre in London. Upon hearing about this, I have directed ministry staff to work with the four hospitals now, and the health units in London and Windsor, to ensure that the hospitals carry out a risk assessment of the situation as it pertains to these shared medical instruments and respond appropriately.

We continue to work closely with the hospitals, the public health units and the federal government on this matter. A teleconference of all affected parties is scheduled for later this afternoon. An action plan will be developed at that time.

I am grateful to all MPPs we've been in contact with on this matter and to all the personnel who are providing their assistance in this matter as well.

I will continue to monitor the situation very closely, and I will provide the Legislature with regular updates.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** I thank the minister for informing the House about this most recent development. I know that his ministry staff have been working with our local officials, and I want to pay tribute to those local officials—our medical officer of health and others—who have been doing an enormous task. It's a serious situation, but I understand the risks are minuscule and all levels of government are co-operating.

One thing I do want to say to the minister: it's also my understanding that there are some significant costs associated with this, and I know the ministry will look at those issues, not only the cost to Hotel-Dieu Grace but now to Windsor Regional, the London Health Sciences Centre and St Joseph's Health Centre in terms of their equipment and what may be needed in terms of equipment and also the additional costs associated with this on the operating side. This will continue to unfold.

My other understanding is that the sterilization process of the equipment itself tends to damage it, so it's difficult at this time to get an accurate assessment of all the costs

associated with this unfortunate situation. I know the minister is sensitive to those concerns, and I believe he will respond appropriately when it comes time to replace that equipment and to deal with the additional operating costs which I don't believe anybody could have anticipated.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** I add my words of thanks to the minister for the ongoing monitoring and the timely updates, both from his staff, who have been in contact with us over the course of the morning, and here in the Legislature.

I was going to raise the issue of attendant costs for the institutions. That has been raised by my friend from the official opposition. I see the minister nodding in agreement that it is an issue the ministry will look at, and we'll expect there will be an appropriate response there.

1350

As an aside, Minister, I think one of the things that struck home for me when I heard the second part of this development today—the sharing of equipment among four regional hospitals from Windsor and London—was the fact that as we deal, not frequently but more frequently than used to be, with cases of rare diseases, the whole practice of the way we have driven hospitals to share various services—and equipment and equipment sterilization is just one of them—may be something we need to look at from the perspective of public health. I recognize there would be costs attendant on that, but I would ask the minister to take a look within the ministry if any policies have been set that guide hospitals in this, or whether it is something that has been driven at the local hospital level, often as a result of fiscal realities they face, which have just gotten a little worse with the hammer of legislation over them. I think it is an issue that from a reasonable perspective, looking at good public health policy, we might want to revisit as a province.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just before we begin, the member for Toronto-Danforth will know that she was named this morning. She is not allowed in the Legislature this afternoon as well. I would ask her to kindly leave the chamber.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** No, I can't recognize you. You've already been thrown out this morning.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** You'll be here alone if you're here tomorrow. Make it tomorrow. That would be great.

*Ms Churley left the chamber.*

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question today is for the Minister of Education. I want to talk to you about your private school voucher program. In May 2000, you were asked about this kind of

proposal when it was first put forward by Stockwell Day. You said, and I quote—

*Interjections.*

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, I can understand that your colleagues are rather defensive today, but this is a very important issue and I'd ask you to address it. You said, "The \$300 million that it would cost would have to come from other programs or from taxpayers' pockets. There's no magic money tree."

We on this side of the House are curious, on behalf of working families. We want to know where you found this magic money tree, and, if none exists, can you tell us why you decided to take money that's badly needed to reduce class sizes, replace mouldy portables and buy textbooks—why have you taken money that could be used in those ways and instead decided to reward those who want to send their children to Upper Canada College?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Actually, I thought my colleagues were rather feisty today.

The honourable member is quite right: there is no magic money tree. What there is is management of our fiscal resources so we can put our money into priority areas like public education, like health care. That's where we've been putting our resources. We increased education spending again this year, over \$360 million, because we know those resources are needed in our classrooms.

Our commitment to the public education system is very clear. We are also very clear about making that system better, about setting higher standards, about helping our students meet those standards, about giving school boards the ability to use those resources to meet local priorities. That's what our commitment to public education is and will continue to be.

**Mr McGuinty:** That was wonderful, Madam Minister, and you delivered it very well and it was well rehearsed. But I want you to focus on the issue at hand. We're talking about taking money that is desperately needed in public education and sending it over to our private schools. We think that is wrong. We think we've got a responsibility to help remedy some of the problems that you, through your policies, have created in public education.

I ask you again: why is this a good thing for public education? Why is it a good idea for taxpayers to take their dollars and give them to parents who want to send their kids to Upper Canada College? Why is that in the interest of public education?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member likes to say he supports public education. Parents said we needed change in public education, we needed higher standards, we needed a better curriculum, we needed testing. Do you know what? The honourable member spoke and voted against every one of those improvements to public education. So I've got to tell you, his so-called commitment has to be questioned.

Secondly, neither I nor anybody else in my caucus has to rehearse any commitment to public education. We have made new investments in the classrooms. We have made new investment in the system. We continue to meet the commitments we said we would make.

One of the other things we think is very important is that we respect parental choice, something the honourable member tried to say he thought he was in support of—maybe, maybe not. We respect parental choice. If he wants to tell the Hindu families, the Jewish families, the Christian families and the Muslim families in his riding and the ridings of some of his other colleagues that he doesn't respect their parental choice, then let him do so.

**Mr McGuinty:** You can cloak this in whatever guise you so choose, but you've introduced vouchers into the province of Ontario. If you give taxpayer dollars to parents for them to send their kids to private schools, that's a voucher—pure, plain and simple.

I want you to speak to this issue very directly. You haven't answered this yet. I thought that at heart you were a defender of public education. I thought that at heart, when it came right down to it, you believed in public education, that you understood the value of public education to our working families. This makes it evident that you do not. But it's never too late. Tell us once again, because we're looking to understand this, why is it that vouchers that will enable parents to pay to send their kids to Upper Canada College are a good thing for Ontario's public education?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The biggest threat to public education in this province is people who believe that political protest can happen in our classrooms. Where was the honourable member and his members when teachers were on the picket line and parents were saying to those teachers, "Please go back into the classroom. Please stop disrupting my child's education"? They were out there encouraging those teachers to stay on the picket line, to delay in the disruption to education.

When the task force on extracurricular activities made a recommendation that one of the biggest problems in classrooms on extracurricular activities was the fact that some unions were advocating, were pressuring, were encouraging some of their members not to do extracurricular activities, I noticed the Liberal Party didn't seem to think that recommendation was an important recommendation for the unions and the government to accept.

We put on the table on Monday a very important compromise for the public education system to make sure we had extra remediation for our kids, to make sure we had extracurricular—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The minister's time is up.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask for unanimous consent to allow Mr Kwinter, the member for York Centre, to make a statement on whether all Liberals agree with—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Is there unanimous consent? I heard some noes.

New question.

**Mr McGuinty:** Clearly the members of the government have decided the best defence is to be offensive. The minister cannot defend the indefensible.

Minister, I know you're having difficulty grappling with this and defending it, but let's focus for a minute on the cost. You are telling us that this will cost \$300 million when fully implemented. Your own finance official told us yesterday that this number is based entirely on current private school enrolment.

Let's be honest. Your \$3,500 voucher will act as an incentive. That's how the markets work. I shouldn't have to tell you that. That means it's going to lead to a growing rate of enrolment in our private schools. That means that the \$300 million is clearly a very conservative estimate. We believe we're looking at close to half a billion dollars that is going to be the net cost of the new voucher program you've introduced in Ontario.

1400

Minister, why is it that at a time when we have no money for English as a second language, no money for special education, no money to take kids out of mouldy portables and put them into schools, no money for textbooks, you've got half a billion dollars for private schools in Ontario?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** This is indeed a red-letter day. I've actually heard the honourable member have concern about public expenditure. This is a first.

The honourable member likes to think that he is in favour of public education, and yet every time we have put forward improvements, every time we have brought forward curriculum, high standards, testing, every time we did that he opposed that. When we sat there and increased money for special education, when we sat there and decreased the number of portables our children had to sit in because of the neglect of the system his government left, did he support that and did he encourage that? No. He went out and said that the new funding, those higher standards were somehow some attack on the system. When we put on the table a significant package of new initiatives, a significant compromise that can help restore extracurricular and remediation back in our schools, we don't hear the honourable member—

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up. Supplementary.

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock.

**Hon Mr Young:** I was just wondering, if the member from Hamilton East is intent upon heckling throughout question period, perhaps he could regain his seat.

**The Speaker:** I thank the Attorney General. He controls the law outside of here; I control it in, and I will do it. I thank him very much.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. If he wants to argue with me, he will be named. I don't know if the Attorney General wants to be kicked out, but he will be if he continues to argue with me. I will look after it.

Supplementary. Sorry for the interruption. Leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** I can appreciate why the government members are making every effort to bail out the minister. She is clearly very uncomfortable with this policy.

You want to take half a billion dollars and put it into private schools. I want to review the current state of affairs for you one more time. We have turmoil in our schools. We have stressed-out teachers. We've suffered from an absence of extracurricular activities, in some cases for over two years now. You have slashed English-as-a-second-language programs. You have slashed special education programs. You have slashed adult education programs. There are today in Ontario—and this is a matter that is very shameful, Minister—over 35,000 students waiting to be assessed for special education by board psychologists. That is the real state of affairs in public education. So I ask you again, why is it that you have half a billion dollars for private schools, but there's no money for pressing needs in public education?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member likes to inflate figures. Those are not the figures the finance minister put forward in his budget yesterday. But here are a few other figures for you, honourable member. What about the \$12.9 billion in public education spending that today is almost \$13.8 billion with our new enhancements? What about the over 360 million new dollars we've put into public education this year alone, more money boards can use for special education, more money they can use for ESL, more money they can use to decrease the number of portables?

We respect and believe the public education system is a foundation for this province. That's why we have increased—

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Windsor-St Clair, please take the sign down. Sorry for the interruption. Minister of Education.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I know the honourable members across the way don't want to hear about the increase in investments we've put in the public education system, about the improvements we are making to the public education system, and about the fact that we respect parental choice, obviously something the honourable member has a little difficulty grasping.

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up. Final supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, it's now up to you to explain to the people of Ontario why it was that shortly over a month ago you stood dead against this. You said, "No way, not now, not ever." That's your responsibility now, to explain that to the people of Ontario.

If you won't believe my figures, then I'll refer you to Annie Kidder and the People for Education and her most recent report. Based on her survey of parents right across the province, she tells us that 66% of schools reported

that students have to share textbooks. She tells us that, province-wide, parents are raising at least \$25 million a year now for things like classroom supplies, for things like computers, library books, textbooks. She tells us that 42% of schools reported fundraising for classroom supplies. She tells us that fundraising for library books was reported by 50% of schools.

I say to you again, Madam Minister, given the state of public education, given the damage that you have inflicted on public education, given the loss of confidence that you've inspired in public education in the minds of our parents, why is it that if you have half a billion dollars to spend, you can't put it in public education and instead you want to put it in private schools?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Again, the honourable member likes to throw around figures, so let me throw around some figures. We have put into public education more than half a billion dollars. We've put over \$350 million into public education this year alone. I know he likes to ignore that.

The other thing he likes to conveniently ignore is that his own Liberal Party in Ottawa said that this kind of parental choice was fine. I didn't hear the honourable member standing up and disagreeing with that.

Secondly, funding independent schools is something that many provinces do. I haven't heard the honourable member stand up and disagree with them.

In this party and in this government, parental choice, giving parents the information they need to make intelligent decisions about schools, is something we believe in. We respect that. We've brought forward initiatives to increase parental voices and choices in the public system. We are respecting those who want to go into Montessori schools, Jewish schools, Hindu schools, Christian schools. Obviously, the honourable member does not respect—

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up.

New question.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** To the Minister of Education, we now see where those buzzwords that Conservatives and Liberals use about choice in education lead us to. They lead us to vouchers for private education.

Minister, you're actually outdoing George Bush, who says that in the United States he will give a \$1,500 voucher for people who want to withdraw their children from public schools and put them in private schools. You're going to offer a \$3,500 voucher. So you're even going to outdo George Bush.

What is worse, this is money that our public schools desperately need. So I want you to tell people across Ontario how you justify taking \$3,500 per child out of public school funding and handing it over to parents as an enticement voucher to put their children into private schools. How do you justify that when you've already got problems in the public school system?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Unlike the NDP, we did not take money out of the public education system. We have been putting money into the public education system. Theirs is the party that brought in the social contract to take money

out of teachers' wages, to take money out of the school system. We have been increasing public education funding in this province because we believe it is a very important foundation both in terms of the economic prosperity for this province and the quality of life in this province. That's why we have put those commitments forward.

The budget is very clear. We have made new investments in public education. We're going to continue to make new investments in public education. No one is taking money from the public education system to do anything.

**Mr Hampton:** The Minister of Education knows that there are tens of thousands of students out there who cannot get the special education resources they need. You know that you've got thousands of classrooms out there where you do not have a full set of textbooks. You know that you've got school boards out there that are laying off music teachers, laying off phys-ed teachers, laying off full-time librarians. You know that you've got school boards out there that have no idea how they are going to find the budget to do all the things they need to do if they're going to deliver a quality education to their students.

They could have desperately used that \$300 million. Instead, you're going to use it as an enticement for parents who want to withdraw their children from the public schools and put them into private schools. That's what it boils down to, Minister. Your \$300 million is not something neutral. It will erode public schools. It will entice parents to take their children out of public schools and put them into private schools.

Minister, I'm asking you to do what the majority of people want in this province: put the \$300 million into the public school funding so parents can have the kind of quality education they want. That's the right thing to do. It's not too late. Back off. Will you do it?

1410

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** This government has already put more than \$300 million into the public education system this year because we believe in its importance, because there are members of this caucus who have children in the public system, who have grandchildren in the public system, who have wives and husbands and daughters and sons who are teachers in the public system. So for that member to sit here and say that somehow or other we are sitting here presiding over the demise of public education when we tried to bring back support workers into the schools in Toronto so that the public education system could continue, so those kids could have the education they deserve—who stood in this House and denied those children that opportunity? The honourable member's party. So much for his commitment to public education.

**Mr Hampton:** Minister, just so you know, our argument was that the problem is with your funding formula. The funding formula for public education is not adequate. That's why we see so many labour disputes. That's why we see so many teachers leaving Toronto. And that's why, in part, you see parents taking their

children out of public schools and putting them into private schools, and you're going to further that, worsen it; in fact, you're going to entice them to do it. That is what is so wrong about this, and that is what is so wrong about the buzzwords "choice in education" that you and the Liberals use so frequently.

But, Minister, I recognize we won't get anywhere with you in the House, so we're going to take this outside the Legislature and we're going to sponsor public forum after public forum to show you how wrong you are.

I just want to ask you one question: does it make you happy to know that the public education system is being underfunded and is being eroded from within while you give your well-off friends money so they can take their children and put them into private schools?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** What makes me happy is to know that this party and this government, in 1995 and again in 1999, ran on a platform to strengthen and improve the public education system, to put more money in the classroom, to bring in higher standards, to have a more rigorous curriculum, to bring in testing for students, a comprehensive teacher testing program so that we could give parents the information they need to make intelligent decisions about how well their school is doing. This party campaigned and is delivering on a plan for education quality reform in the public education system that is going to reward those who do better, who improve, because that's what parents want and that's what children want. That is the commitment of this party, that is the commitment of this Minister of Education, and nothing we have done this week is taking away from that.

#### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has now approved your sell-off of the Bruce nuclear station to British Energy. That means there is one step to go in this process: the final business dealings.

Since last October, New Democrats have insisted that the Provincial Auditor ought to see this deal and ought to be able to tell us whether this is a good deal for the taxpayers and the hydro ratepayers of Ontario. Your government and your members of that committee have held that up. You've prevented the auditor from looking at this deal.

I'm asking you to be accountable to the taxpayers, finally, to live up to your words. Will you ensure that before this deal is finally done, the documents are turned over to the Provincial Auditor so that he can assure the people of Ontario that this is a good deal for taxpayers and a good deal for ratepayers, not just a good deal for your corporate friends? Will you do that, Minister?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** I released this deal some eight or nine months ago, first to the CBC, who requested it. The auditor is welcome to have the deal. I understand he's saying he's phoning around.

It was your wife, the honourable Shelley Martel, who asked originally for the deal, and I released the deal, so I don't know what the honourable member is talking about.

**Mr Hampton:** I want to point out to the Minister of Energy that under this government's proposal, the Provincial Auditor will not be allowed to see the details of this deal until it is signed, sealed and delivered. In other words, your government has said you will not allow the Provincial Auditor to see it until it's a done deal.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** So much for accountability and transparency.

**Mr Hampton:** No transparency, no accountability to the taxpayers and the ratepayers of the province.

The Premier, when this deal was signed, said he didn't mind if it went before a committee and was examined in detail. What are you worried about now? Why won't you let the Provincial Auditor see the documents of this deal until after it is signed and completed and nothing can be done about it? What are you afraid of, Minister? Where's your accountability now?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** This is a terrific deal for the people of Ontario. The only ones I can find opposed to it are the New Democratic Party and supporters of the New Democratic Party. Even the Power Workers' Union and the other union of professional electrical engineers own 5% of this new company. So you're out of sync even with the labour movement, which took an equity position in Bruce. They're happy for the jobs.

I dare him to go up to the Bruce community and talk like this in the Bruce community, where hundreds of jobs have been saved, where \$437 million worth of British Energy/Bruce Power's money is going into bringing back two of the four units that are not in service right now, creating hundreds of new jobs in the Bruce community, economic opportunity and clean power that doesn't hurt the atmosphere for the people of Ontario.

I don't see what's wrong with any of that. Go up to the Bruce community and take your theories up there. I've released the deal. There's tremendous transparency, and I have no idea what you're talking about.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The minister's time is up.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** My question is for the Minister of Health, and my question is about this government's continued attack on our public hospitals. Minister, your government's record has been a litany of sheer chaos in our hospitals. We've had cutbacks and record bed closures and 10,000 nurses laid off. We've had long waiting lists for surgery and emergency rooms closed and critically ill patients turned away, and we have had inquests into patient deaths.

Now you're launching the second attack wave. Ontario hospitals told you they needed \$650 million just to keep their doors open to patients who need their care. They said that without new money there would be more

bed closures and more emergency room shutdowns and more nurses laid off. Your response yesterday was to cut their budgets by \$100 million.

Minister, for six long years we've been asking your government the same question: what do you want hospitals to cut? Do you want more emergency room shutdowns? Do you want more beds closed? Do you want more nurses laid off? What do you want these hospitals to cut?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** The honourable member is wrong. She is wrong when she says that we are cutting the budgets of hospitals in this budget. She is wrong when she says that there is a \$100-million shortfall. She is wrong when she says that we are not funding the health care system to the extent that is necessary. This budget, a budget of which we on this side of the House are all proud, is a budget that increases yet again, because the need is there, health care funding by 5.4%, consistent with other provinces in the Dominion of Canada, consistent with the growth in demand and utilization and population growth and inflation. Hospitals are sharing in that growth.

So you are wrong when you say hospitals are receiving a cut. You are wrong, wrong, wrong.

**Mrs McLeod:** It's the hospitals that have to deal with the \$100 million that they are telling you you are cutting from their budgets. Your government wants to talk about accountability for these hospitals, so let's talk about accountability, Minister. Let's use your words. Let's talk about accountability on the front lines.

I want to know who is accountable when the Greater Niagara hospital is going to have to lay off even more nurses because they don't have enough money to keep them on staff. I want to know who is accountable in Ottawa or London or Hamilton or Sarnia when the beds are closed and the waiting lists for surgery are getting longer. I want to know who's going to be accountable when the town of Picton loses its hospital because they can't afford to keep it open. I want to know who's going to be accountable when the emergency rooms in Toronto are closed more than 40% of the time because their hospitals have no room to care for patients. I want to know who was accountable when Joshua Fleuelling and Kyle Martyn died.

Accountability, Minister, is a two-way street. You're one of the partners. You can't keep cutting hospital budgets and taking no responsibility for the consequences.

I ask you again, what are you prepared to see cut in our hospital services to patients?

1420

**Hon Mr Clement:** The honourable member is wrong when she says that we are prepared to cut the hospital budgets. In the situation she mentioned in greater Niagara, my understanding is that the nurses are not being cut, they are being reassigned, and as a result of the collective agreement there has to be a severance and then a rehiring. So if she considers that a cut, that's a very strange definition of a cut. She is wrong when she says

that we are responsible for nurses being fired or cut from the system. She is wrong in all of her suppositions, and when you're wrong in your suppositions, you're wrong in your conclusions.

So I encourage the honourable member to stick to the facts, and if she has a problem with the way we're spending on our side of the House, with government spending, I encourage her—when we've put an extra \$6 billion into the health care system on behalf of the taxpayers of Ontario since we got elected—to encourage her federal cousins to do their bit as well. With \$6 billion from our side and \$1 billion from their side, we know who is reinvesting in the health care system in Ontario, and it ain't her federal kissing cousins.

#### CENTRAL NORTH CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** My question today is for the Minister of Correctional Services. An announcement was made on Saturday, May 5, that Management and Training Corp was selected to be the private partner to run the Central North Correctional Centre, which is in my riding of Simcoe North. Critics who oppose the privatization of this facility have claimed that privately run jails are less safe than publicly run facilities and that those corporations that operate prisons can't be held to high standards. Minister, how will you ensure that this is not the case in this particular facility?

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services):** I thank the member from Simcoe North very much for the question. I know he has had a very strong and passionate interest in this particular facility and this particular question, because of course the facility is located in his riding and he needs to speak to the constituents of the riding of Simcoe North—

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Sampson:** Well, as I say to the member opposite who has been clapping and applauding and barking, he's been speaking quite aggressively and consistently to the members of his riding, including yesterday, when he took the winner of that contract to his riding and in front of 200 to 300 people explained to them how this particular operator was going to help us run the safest and securest facility, the most cost-effective—

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Sampson:** They said they were welcoming him, they were happy to have him here because, I say to the member opposite who is barking across the floor, here's a private corporation that's going to bring 500 new jobs into this community. If it had been your choice, you'd have locked them out.

**Mr Dunlop:** Thank you for that response, Minister. It's reassuring to know that our private partner will have to meet the high standards and will have its performance measured and reported publicly.

I understand that Management and Training Corp currently operates 13 correctional facilities, most of

which are medium-security facilities. Penetanguishene correctional centre is maximum security. Will the private sector partner be able to operate the facility safely and effectively?

**Hon Mr Sampson:** I thank the member very much for the question. To continue on with the answer that I was giving earlier, this will be a very safely and securely run facility because it will be run by a US corporation that has some experience in this.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Sampson:** All right, I say to the members opposite, we now clearly understand where you stand on job creation: no private sector jobs for Penetanguishene. That's the Liberal position: they don't want any private sector workers in Penetanguishene; they want them all government-run, they want to have government employees. In fact, I say to the members of this chamber, if it had been the Liberal government over on this side, there would be all public sector workers, and the private sector people would all be unemployed. That's the definition of prosperity to my friends across the floor.

We believe in job creation on this side of the floor. We believe in working with the private sector to create meaningful jobs and employment and opportunity for hard-working families in Ontario.

#### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** My question is again to the Minister of Health. Minister, 25% of the people of this province have no family doctor—that means that more than 2.5 million people have no family doctor they can call—and 109 communities are officially underserved for family doctors. That means, by your own ministry figures, there are not enough doctors in 109 communities. Those communities need at least 500 family doctors right now, today. In northern Ontario, there is a desperate need for 167 medical specialists, and you don't even keep track of how many specialists you need in southern Ontario.

Not having a doctor, not being able to get care, is the single biggest concern that people in my community have, and I believe every member in this House would tell you exactly the same thing. Yet there is not one word in yesterday's budget, not one word about doctor shortages and not one cent to start fixing this constantly growing, urgent problem. Minister, do you not understand how desperate this situation is or do you just not care that 2.5 million people have no family doctor?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Maybe I can remind the honourable member of another document that was presented to this House, which was the speech from the throne, which very particularly and very specifically dealt with the physician shortage issue, both in the short term and in the long term. Part of it is the medical school announcement. This government got off previous government's fences and said we are going to be building a new medical school for northern Ontario. Of course, this was elec-

trifying in the north. When Diane Marleau, a Liberal Sudbury MP, says, "I want us to give credit to Mike Harris and his team for this great decision that was made," I get some comfort from the fact that the federal Liberal government understands the importance of this decision.

The honourable member should know well that there is money in the current budget of the Ministry of Health that deals with a lot of different aspects of the physician shortage. That's why we're funding family health networks, for gosh sakes, so that the rosters of doctors are there 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for each and every Ontarian. We've put our money where our mouth—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The minister's time's up. Supplementary.

**Mrs McLeod:** It's all still total fluff. We know what was in the speech from the throne. It was only two weeks ago that you went out with a flurry of wonderful sounding announcements about a new medical school and about foreign-trained physicians getting faster opportunities to practise medicine in Ontario, and that's why we can't understand why there was no mention of either one in your budget yesterday. Didn't you know the Minister of Finance had no money for you? Was all that just for show? Did you think nobody would notice there was no money in the budget to do any of this?

I come back to medical school spaces. Two years ago your predecessor sent Dr McKendry out to see if there was a doctor shortage and he came back and said, "Yes, Elizabeth, we need 1,000 doctors." A year and a half ago an expert panel was sent out to bring you recommendations on how to deal with the shortage. You have recommendations from that expert panel sitting on your desk right now, and, Minister, one of those recommendations is that you should put in place 80 new first-year medical spots for this September. You told us yesterday there is not one new first-year medical spot for this September. Why did you not at least fund the 80 first-year medical school spots your own experts told you were needed?

**Hon Mr Clement:** I'm sorry, we're funding the tuition; we're funding the incentives; we're funding everything to do from top to bottom with attracting top-quality, excellent medical students to our institutions. So I make no apologies with our response to the McKendry report because we acted. We've said that if tuition's a problem, we'll be there, that if there are moving expenses, we'll be there, that if there's an attraction to a hospital that has to be beefed up, we'll be there. We have been there and we make no apologies for that. We're moving ahead with family health networks, so people will have access 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to family physicians. We are supporting the family physicians in Ontario.

We are moving ahead with the medical school. If the honourable member doesn't want to have regard for my announcement in this House pursuant to the speech from

the throne, perhaps she could have regard for the estimates that come out in just a few days' time.

#### WEST NILE VIRUS

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** My question is directed to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. As I'm sure you're aware, there has been extensive media coverage over the last few weeks about the possibility of West Nile virus entering the country from the US. As you know, cases of West Nile virus were reported throughout the northeast United States last year, but thankfully none of those cases were reported in Canada. I understand our local health units are concerned about the possibility of this virus entering Ontario. My constituents in Northumberland would like to know what steps our government is taking to ensure that public health safety is being protected here in the province of Ontario.

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'd like to thank the honourable member for Northumberland for his question on the West Nile virus. He is quite correct when he says that this is a risk to public health that we take very seriously. I want to inform this House that Ontario's chief medical officer of health has met with local health units to advise them on a public education strategy that has two components. One is source reduction because the virus is spread by mosquitoes; a reduction of mosquito breeding sites such as standing water on private property is essential. Also, there are personal protective measures that all citizens in Ontario can employ. We should obviously avoid mosquito bites. We should be wearing long sleeves in advance of this.

I want to stress to all members of this House that the risk to human health from the West Nile virus is relatively low. It's an infection that has flu-like symptoms. But that being said, we encourage people to take the necessary precautions.

1430

**Mr Galt:** My constituents would like to know what you're doing in terms of monitoring the possible entry of this disease into Ontario. Only two days ago, on May 8, Health Canada put out a news release stating that border communities, including Cornwall, Brockville and Kingston right here in Ontario, are most susceptible to the possible occurrence of the West Nile virus. Minister, can you assure this House that we're doing everything possible to monitor the entry of this disease into Ontario?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Monitoring and communication certainly are our priorities. It's our priority to ensure that all communities, but particularly those closest to New York state where outbreaks occurred last year, are kept informed, and we want to be kept informed of any suspected cases.

We've made changes from last year's surveillance system to ensure quick and accurate reporting of cases. We're focusing on testing birds that have the most common incidence of carrying the virus; that includes all

birds in the crow family. Of course we're monitoring human cases of encephalitis and meningitis. We encourage the public to report sightings of dead crows, ravens or jays to their local health units. These will be picked up by the local health units and sent to the Canadian Co-operative Wildlife Health Centre to be dealt with either by Health Canada or the Canadian Food Inspection Agency laboratory.

We have a plan and part of it is communication and part of it is collaboration.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** If we could stop the clock for a quick minute, we have three honoured guests in the Speaker's gallery. We have two members of the Saskatchewan Legislature: Mr Andrew Thomson and Mr Dan D'Autremont. Accompanying them is Mr Viktor Kaczkowski, formerly one of our clerks and presently clerk assistant at the Saskatchewan Legislature.

#### WATER QUALITY

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** A question to the Minister of the Environment: The truth coming from the Walkerton inquiry is that Ministry of the Environment staff and even the Minister of Health himself told your government to take action on safe water before Walkerton happened, but you didn't.

Yesterday in the budget you tried to do some backfilling. Your government issued a press release claiming that \$25 million more was being devoted to clean, safe drinking water, but then we look at the details, and we find that of the \$25 million, \$3 million is going to brownfield development, \$4 million to implementation of the Gibbons report, \$5 million to SWAT teams that have nothing to do with clean drinking water, and in fact there's only \$6 million for Operation Clean Water. Minister, why would you issue a press release telling the people of Ontario that \$25 million more was devoted to clean drinking water when, by your own documents, it's not true?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** Our government is very pleased that the environment has been recognized as a priority. In response to the question from the leader of the third party, I think it's important to point out that since 1999 we have hired 130 new enforcement-related staff as part of Operation Clean Water and SWAT. As well, since 1999 we have enhanced our enforcement activities. There has been an increase in orders issued of 312%, tickets issued of 372%, and as the leader of the third party knows, we have the toughest fines and jail terms at the present time for polluters in Ontario.

**Mr Hampton:** The question was, why were you trying to tell people there was \$25 million going into Operation Clean Water when there's only \$6 million? That's the question. When you start citing your other statistics, Minister, when you say you hired back 100,

please acknowledge that you fired 1,000 before Walkerton happened. When you say you put more money in the budget, will you acknowledge that the budget now is lower than it was in 1995-96, 1996-97, 1997-98 and lower than it was in 1999-2000? You continue to cut the Ministry of the Environment budget even after Walkerton has happened. The \$6 million you're putting into the so-called Operation Clean Water doesn't even keep pace with inflation.

Minister, do more people have to die before you and your government get it? Clean water is a priority for the citizens of Ontario. Why isn't it a priority for you?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Clean water is a priority for our government. I cannot understand how the leader of the third party can possibly understand that SWAT teams and brownfield initiatives and Operation Clean Water and the implementation of the Val Gibbons report have nothing to do with clean water. They are all related to clean water.

Let me just share with you: We have seen an increase of 51% in the budget of the Ministry of the Environment since 1997-98. There is \$6 million for Operation Clean Water. There is \$5 million more to SWAT. There is \$3 million more for brownfields. There is \$4 million more for the Gibbons report, and \$7 million for initiatives that we will still announce.

Our government has moved forward in a way that we are ensuring that the people in this province have regulations and standards that go beyond anything any—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

New question?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a question to the Minister of the Environment. I should note to the minister that out of the 136 staff she talked about, unfortunately their Management Board made them all temporary staff with 18-month contracts. They'll be gone after that, when the pressure is off, although I will try to help her retain them.

I want to ask the minister about capital funding, however. If you combine the capital funding and the operating funding of your ministry, since you took office it is down today 56%. With the testimony coming out of the Walkerton inquiry pointing to the need for massive infusions of hundreds upon hundreds of millions of dollars in capital expenditure to ensure that our water treatment plants, sewage treatment plants and pipes are in the best possible condition to produce the water, with that before us and with David Lindsay saying you're going to need over \$9 billion to do the job, how is it that your government can justify leaving you with only \$5 million in the water protection fund this year when in fact it's hundreds upon hundreds of millions of dollars that will be required to assist municipalities in meeting their obligations to produce clean and safe water for the people of Ontario?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** For the sake of correcting the record, I should let the member know that all the

members of the SWAT team are permanent. They will be continuing with their responsibilities.

But I think it's important to take a look at what is happening, and that is, money is flowing through SuperBuild. We have committed over \$1 billion in order to assist our municipal partners with strategic programs, including environmental initiatives. As you know, there's \$600 million over five years for the small, rural municipalities, there's \$250 million to help our larger municipalities, and there's another \$250 million to move forward on transportation initiatives in order that we can reduce gridlock and air emissions.

**Mr Bradley:** I'm dealing with the problem of water. I think the minister knows the tremendous problems out there with producing clean, safe water. Unfortunately, what you've mentioned are many funds from which you must take money for roads and you must take it to upgrade bridges or other infrastructure projects. I'm talking about those specifically related to the production of water. It could be that for the North Bay plant to have a proper plant might be \$30 million for one plant alone. Multiply that right across the province. Your Management Board has given you peanuts to deal with. They have over \$2 billion in tax cuts for the largest corporations in the province of Ontario. They've given you a pittance to be able to deal with these water projects.

It leads me to this conclusion. Let me ask the minister if I'm wrong in coming to this conclusion, and that is that by taking away all this money for water and sewer projects, all this money that must be invested, really what your Premier and your Treasurer want to do is hand over the keys to the water and sewer projects in this province, to the operation of waterworks in this province, to your friends in the private sector who show up to your fundraisers in such great numbers.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Perhaps the member opposite doesn't understand. He talks about money for capital. He should know that the money for capital is presently being administered by SuperBuild under OSTAR.

1440

#### VISITOR

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I know that members would want to join me in welcoming one of my favourite uncles to the Legislature today. My uncle Mike Keogh is in the members' gallery west.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** It is not a point of order. I was wondering why the gentleman was clapping when you spoke. Now I know.

#### WORKFARE

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Earlier today we debated a resolution to support the expansion of Ontario Works placements. I was quite pleased to speak in favour of that resolution, because I

know first-hand from my community that this program helps both the participant and the community itself.

In my home riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, the site of the old Royal Victoria Hospital is being transformed into a home to care for elderly people with long-term-care needs. There will also be a retirement facility that will help improve the quality of life for many elderly residents in the city of Barrie. Ontario Works participants have played a key role in making this happen. They have helped convert the site from an old hospital into a new home for seniors in my community. In turn, they have also developed skills that can help them go on and work at local construction sites in the Barrie area.

Minister, what progress has the government made in expanding its workforce program so that more communities can benefit?

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** We thought to create Ontario Works placements to provide people with some skills, some experience they could put down on their next job application so they could get some dignity contributing to their own community. The program has indeed been a tremendous success. We not only have met the targets that had been unmet in previous years, but we are making very solid progress on that.

I can tell the member opposite that in Simcoe county they've not just met the target, they've exceeded the target because of the hard work and dedication of a really tremendous group of people in Simcoe county. They have a great county council. They have great caseworkers and great folks there. That success is really phenomenal.

I can tell the member opposite that I visited Barrie and had the opportunity to talk to one placement. She told me what a huge difference the placement made in her job search, and that the one thing it got her that she wasn't able to get before—she opened her pocket and pulled out a piece of paper and unfolded it. It was her first job reference. It was someone recommending her for a job. The good news is that when she applied for the job, she got it.

**Mr Tascona:** One of the key areas I think this government needs to do a better job on in Ontario Works placements is the public sector. I can think of a number of good examples in my riding where public sector groups really need additional help and, in turn, would offer good experience to Ontario Works participants. We heard this morning that while the government has made some good first steps, there are still some areas where we need to do more.

Minister, what action are you committed to take to increase the number of placements in the public sector?

**Hon Mr Baird:** Like the member opposite, I think it is important that the Ontario government, the major employer in the public sector in Ontario, lead by example. We set a target of 750 people last year. We not only have met that target as an employer, to show a good example, but we've in fact exceeded it by more than 300. Particularly, my good friend John Snobelen, the Minister

of Natural Resources, has had participants working to preserve wetlands, maintain trails and restore damaged shorelines, helping to give a real benefit to our province by restoring some natural beauty.

I do think we can do more, though. I think we can provide more people with some experience. We can provide more people with some skill sets, and we can give people something—I'm going to say to the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford that perhaps I didn't appreciate the confidence people can get, the self-esteem that can be increased. You can see it in Ontario Works participants each and every day when they participate in these programs.

We are satisfied with that success this year, but we want to increase the targets this coming year and do even more to help those who are left on the system.

### IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a question for the Minister of Citizenship. I have in front of me the guidebook to the Ministry of Citizenship. It says that your job is to "coordinate provincial policies and programs which support immigrants."

How are you supporting immigrants when the whole world knows that we have the best-educated taxi drivers and pizza delivery people? We have a list of over 400 doctors, as well, who have passed the Ontario exams but are unable to practise while 109 of our communities go without doctors. We also have a list that includes technicians, scientists and engineers.

Your Premier promised six years ago that he would help those immigrants with professional degrees to quickly gain entry into professional life. That was never done. In fact, you've done the opposite. You've done cutting of immigrant services. Mr Minister, you've got the mandate. Why don't you help them?

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors):** First of all, I want to acknowledge that the honourable member opposite has raised an issue which is of great concern to all Ontarians. We agree in all corners of this country and of this province with the importance of immigrants. In fact, Ontario receives far more immigrants than any other province and we're very proud of that fact. The concern that has been expressed, not only by the member opposite but by all members on this side of the House, is how little support we're getting from the federal government when we open our doors so generously and so warmly to the rest of the world.

You've just raised one issue. There are a whole series of issues. I advise you that your former colleague Mrs Caplan has an immigration bill before the federal House at this very moment and I would invite you to make that phone call to your federal cousins and express to them the same kind of concern that you're bringing to the House.

**Mr Ruprecht:** Let me just point out how concerned this government is about foreign professionals gaining

entry. We've heard previously that there are 109 communities that don't have doctors. The College of Physicians and Surgeons gave you and all MPPs a list of recommendations and it says exactly how you can accomplish it. They have acted. You've done nothing. You've got the recommendations. You have not acted at all on this.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, our province needs 130,000 skilled workers. These are 130,000 unfilled jobs. Yet, right here in Ontario, the unemployment rate for foreign-trained professionals is more than three times that of the national average. Only 24% have found jobs in their professions. Mrs Caplan, our former colleague, approached you to sign an agreement right here a few months ago and you have not signed it. It would have given you millions of dollars in terms of immigrant settlement services and it would have produced a policy made right in Ontario and you have refused.

You get up right now and tell me that I'm wrong and that she has not approached you. Get up right now and tell us that, because you're absolutely wrong. You could have had millions of dollars in the kitty to supply these services. You've done nothing—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The member's time is up.

**Hon Mr Jackson:** First of all, the member is wrong. I'm surprised that the member doesn't have his facts correct. The fact of the matter is that this province has increased its funding for immigrant settlement programs. My colleague the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and my colleague the Minister of Education are spending millions of dollars in second-language and third-language training for immigrants in this province.

The federal government is spending a lot of its money in its refugee appeals program, in providing supports and accommodation. But there comes a magical moment when, as soon as that individual ceases to become a refugee, they become the responsibility of the taxpayers of the province. You should save your rhetoric for your friend Mrs Caplan and let her know that Ontario's doors are open but that we want a partnership with the federal government. Otherwise, we may just do what Quebec did. It went and got almost \$100 million to run its own immigration program. Look at where the money is going in this country for those provinces to run their own programs. Maybe we should run our own programs, but we're not getting the support from the federal government.

1450

#### WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** My question is for the Minister of Labour, who is responsible for the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. When this government came into office in 1995, there were a great many complaints about what was then called the

Workers' Compensation Board. Some of the complaints were about the poor service and the high rates, and the financial situation was unsustainable. I know there have been a number of improvements. I wonder if you could take a moment to tell this House how much that board has improved and what those changes are in the past number of years.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I thank the member for Thornhill for the question. Since 1995 there have been a number of dramatic changes at the WSIB and a very positive approach taken by the management.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I know the member from Hamilton would understand this.

Since 1995, the average premium rate has dropped from \$3 to \$2.13, or 29%. Unfunded liability—that is total liability less total assets—is now \$5.7 billion from the 1994 total of \$11.4 billion. We're on target to eliminate the unfunded liability completely, as promised, by 2014. In 2000, the reduction was \$727 million, in part due to an 8% return in the investment portfolio.

Funding ratio: total assets are now 66.8%, the highest since 1981. That was a Conservative government, I might add. In 1995, the ratio was 40%. Forty-two rate groups have been eliminated, further simplifying the system.

It's an unparalleled success story, I think, by this government. The workers of this province should be happy that they are doing such a good job.

**Mrs Molinari:** Thank you, Minister, for those numbers and facts. I wonder if you also have numbers from 1990, when the Liberal government handed it over to the NDP.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I would hate to leave the impression that the only party at fault was the NDP, because that wasn't the case. They were handed a dog's breakfast, when it came to the WSIB, when they took office.

In 1990, the average premium rate was \$3.18. As I said, it's down to \$2.13 from the Liberal domain. Claims were 473,407, and in 1999 they'd gone down to 364,000, a precipitous drop. WSIB employees totalled 5,138 people. In 1999 it was down to 4,260. And let me just say that the total assessable payroll has gone from \$80 billion to \$102 billion, so it lends credence to that often-stated fact by the Conservative government, "We're doing significantly better for less."

In 1990, the unfunded liability, under the poor administrative efforts of the Liberal government, was \$9.1 billion; shameful to say, \$9.1 billion. As I said earlier, it's now down to \$5.7 billion and—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Not many months ago you acknowledged that Ontario hospitals would need

an additional \$380 million this year just to keep pace with inflation and the aging of our population. Then we saw the budget yesterday, and you in fact cut hospital budgets by \$100 million, in effect putting hospitals about \$500 million in the hole. You know that this will mean the laying off of more nurses, the cutting of essential medical services, and more patients who cannot get access to the health care that they need in our hospitals.

Why would you not only not give hospitals the money they need to keep pace with aging and with inflation, but then go on and cut hospitals by a further \$100 million, when you know the disastrous results that will have on nursing and patient care? Why would you do that?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Thank you for the question, but I didn't do that, this government didn't do that and the Minister of Finance and the Premier haven't done that. You are wrong when you say that we have cut funding for hospitals. You are wrong when you say that they are \$100 million short in terms of their funding as part of our budget announcements yesterday. You're wrong when you say that the consequence of government actions necessarily means cutting of staff or cutting or nurses of reducing medical operations or procedures. You're wrong.

The simple matter is that health care funding is up, as part of this budget, by 5.4%. Hospital spending is up. OHIP spending is up. Drug benefit spending is up. Long-term care is up. Mental health is up. One-time operating plans are up—up, up, up.

Our challenge, quite frankly, is to ensure that the system is sustainable over the long term, a publicly funded, universally accessible system, and comments by the leader of the third party are not helpful in that regard.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Pursuant to standing order 55, the statement of the business of the House for the next week:

Monday afternoon will be a Liberal opposition day. Monday evening will be second reading debate of Bill 25.

Tuesday afternoon we will continue with the budget debate. Tuesday evening we will continue debate on Bill 25.

Wednesday afternoon we will continue with the budget debate. Wednesday evening we will continue debate on Bill 25.

Thursday morning, of course, is private members' business, where we will be discussing ballot items 6 and 7, and Thursday afternoon we will begin second reading debate on Bill 30.

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to give you notice to file for the late show this evening.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The member can do that and file appropriate documents.

#### PETITIONS

##### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the northern health travel grant was introduced in 1987 in recognition of the fact that northern Ontario residents are often forced to receive treatment outside their own communities because of the lack of available services; and

"Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged that the costs associated with that travel should not be fully borne by those residents and, therefore, that financial support should be provided by the Ontario government through the travel grant program; and

"Whereas travel, accommodation and other costs have escalated sharply since the program was first put in place, particularly in the area of air travel; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre have all their expenses paid while receiving treatment in the north which creates a double standard for health care delivery in the province; and

"Whereas northern Ontario residents should not receive a different level of health care nor be discriminated against because of their geographical locations;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness and inadequacy of the northern health travel grant program and commit to a review of the program with a goal of providing 100% funding of the travel costs for residents needing care outside their communities until such time as that care is available in their communities."

This is signed by many more of my constituents, who are absolutely determined that they are not going to give up the fight to get fairness and equity for northern Ontario residents when it comes to getting the health care that they need, despite the fact that there was no reference to the northern health travel grant in the budget yesterday.

In full agreement with their concerns, I affix my signature to the petition.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** Mr Speaker, I do appreciate the chance that you were going to give me last week. I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

In agreement, I affix my signature.

#### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** I have a petition here which was presented to me by a student at Queen's University and it's to the Parliament of Ontario. It says:

"Whereas mother bears and cubs are hunted in the fall as they prepare for hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the fall are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas orphaned cubs have a reduced chance of surviving; and

"Whereas an average of 12% of the fall hunt, or 343 cubs a year, are shot in the fall; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted so extensively over bait;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to stop the hunting of mother bears and cubs in the fall and prohibit the use of bait in all bear hunting activities."

This petition is signed by about 500 individuals from my area and elsewhere in Ontario, and I'm pleased to sign it as well.

1500

#### DIABETES TREATMENT

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas over 500,000 people in Ontario have diabetes; and

"Whereas to the expense of treating diabetes, many people cannot afford the ongoing expense of treating diabetes and if left untreated or improperly managed, diabetes can lead to blindness, vascular disease, kidney disease, neuropathy and other problems; and

"Whereas today, more than ever before, people with diabetes can expect to live active, independent and vital lives if they make a lifelong commitment to careful management of the disease; and

"Whereas by providing the resources to successfully manage this disease, the government can ensure more efficient health care for people with diabetes at a reduced cost to the health care system;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all diabetic supplies as prescribed by an endocrinologist be covered under the Ontario health insurance plan."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

#### SALE OF SCHOOLS

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario which reads as follows:

"Whereas Hughes Public School at 17 Innes Ave in the city of Toronto closed down and its premises have been declared surplus by the Toronto District School Board;

"Whereas the city of Toronto has issued a building permit to the Toronto District School Board permitting the reconstruction of Hughes Public School for an entity called Beatrice House, for the purpose of a private academic school...;

"Whereas a lease has not been signed between the Toronto District School Board and Beatrice House while renovations to the building are underway;

"Whereas local taxpayers' concerns have been ignored by the Toronto District School Board;

"Whereas other locations, such as Brother Edmund Rice School at 55 Pelham Park or the Earlscourt Public School at 29 Ascot, which are also being closed down, have been offered to Beatrice House but to no avail;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Honourable Minister of Education investigate the leasing arrangement between the Toronto District School Board and Beatrice House inasmuch as:

"(1) Boards are to seek fair market value when selling, leasing or otherwise disposing of schools, except that the price for the property is not to exceed the value of the ministry's grant for the new pupil places when the purchaser is a coterminous board, a provincial school or a publicly funded care and treatment facility offering programs leading to a diploma;

"(2) Boards are to offer the property to coterminous boards and other public agencies operating in the area in accordance with the priority currently specified in regulation 444/98;

"(3) The Toronto District School Board has not dealt in good faith with our neighbourhood residents;

"Therefore, we respectfully ask you, the minister, to consider our plea for justice. The Toronto District School Board has ignored our concerns and" has ignored "due diligence. We as a community tried everything within our power to fight the glaring and obvious wrong done to us, but to no avail."

Since I agree with this petition, I'm delighted to sign my name to it as well.

#### DIABETES TREATMENT

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** It's always difficult to follow the member for Davenport, but I'll reluctantly try my best.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas over 500,000 people in Ontario have diabetes; and

"Whereas to the expense of treating diabetes, many people cannot afford the ongoing expense of treating diabetes and if left untreated or improperly managed, diabetes can lead to blindness, vascular disease, kidney disease, neuropathy and other problems; and

"Whereas today, more than ever before, people with diabetes can expect to live active, independent and vital lives if they make a lifelong commitment to careful management of the disease; and

"Whereas by providing the resources to successfully manage this disease, the government can ensure more efficient, effective health care for people with diabetes at a reduced cost to the health care system;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all diabetic supplies as prescribed by an endocrinologist be covered under the Ontario health insurance plan."

I'm pleased to support this.

#### ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Mike Harris promised an Ontarians with Disabilities Act during the 1995 election and renewed that commitment in 1997 but has yet to make good on that promise; and

"Whereas the Harris government has not committed to holding open consultations with the various stakeholders and individuals on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act; and

"Whereas the vast majority of Ontario citizens believe that there should be an Ontarians with Disabilities Act to remove the barriers facing the 1.5 million persons with disabilities;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass a strong and effective Ontarians with Disabilities Act that would remove the barriers facing the 1.5 million persons with disabilities in the province of Ontario."

I am in full agreement and will affix my signature hereto.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 336 people.

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** I have here a petition that's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the northern health travel grant was introduced in 1987 in recognition of the fact that northern Ontario residents are often forced to receive treatment outside their own communities because of the lack of available services; and

"Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged that the costs associated with that travel should not be fully borne by those residents and, therefore, that financial support should be provided by the Ontario government through the travel grant program; and

"Whereas travel, accommodation and other costs have escalated sharply since the program was first put in place, particularly in the area of air travel; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre have all their expenses paid while receiving treatment in the north which creates a double standard for health care delivery in the province; and

"Whereas northern Ontario residents should not receive a different level of health care nor be discriminated against because of their geographical locations;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness and inadequacy of the northern health travel grant program and commit to a review of the program with a goal of providing 100% funding of the travel costs for residents needing care outside their communities until such time as that care is available in their communities."

I completely and totally agree with that and I've signed—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Arnott):** Further petitions.

#### DIABETES TREATMENT

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** I've got another petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas over 500,000 people"—and that's half a million—"in Ontario have diabetes; and

"Whereas to the expense of treating diabetes, many people cannot afford the ongoing expense of treating diabetes and if left untreated or improperly managed,

diabetes can lead to blindness, vascular disease, kidney disease, neuropathy and other problems; and

"Whereas today, more than ever before, people with diabetes can expect to live active, independent and vital lives if they make a lifelong commitment to careful management of the disease; and

"Whereas by providing the resources to successfully manage this disease, the government can ensure more efficient health care for people with diabetes at a reduced cost to the health care system;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all diabetic supplies as prescribed by an endocrinologist be covered under the Ontario health insurance plan."

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the northern health travel grant was introduced in 1987 in recognition of the fact that northern Ontario residents are often forced to receive treatment outside their own communities because of the lack of available services; and

"Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged that the costs associated with that travel should not be fully borne by those residents and, therefore, that financial support should be provided by the Ontario government through the travel grant program; and

"Whereas travel, accommodation and other costs have escalated sharply since the program was first put in place, particularly in the area of air travel; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre have all their expenses paid while receiving treatment in the north which creates a double standard for health care delivery in the province; and

"Whereas northern Ontario residents should not receive a different level of health care nor be discriminated against because of their geographical locations;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario," including citizens of Newmarket, Scarborough, Mississauga and Toronto, "petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness and inadequacy of the northern health travel grant program and commit to a review of the program with a goal of providing 100% funding of the travel costs for residents needing care outside their communities until such time as that care is available in their communities."

I'm in full agreement as a southern member and have signed my name hereto.

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#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments; and

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### 2001 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 9, 2001, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** I welcome this opportunity to join in the budget debate. I do so on behalf of Ontario's working families and I do so proudly on behalf of my colleagues in the Ontario Liberal Party caucus.

We on this side of the House are committed to fighting for our families and that's why, without reservation and without hesitation, we must condemn this budget. Clearly, this budget is failing Ontario's working families.

I would ask you to consider a day in the life of one Ontario family. Mom and dad may wake up first to make breakfast. Mom, let's say, grabs some frozen juice out of the freezer and she turns on the tap water. Can she be sure that the water is absolutely safe? She may have some doubts. She remembers Walkerton. I think the important question here is, has this budget done anything to put her mind to rest? Precious little. Our water plants, our pipes and our sewers, our infrastructure is crumbling beneath our feet and yet this budget invests less in infrastructure than we have during the course of the past 15 years. That is what I call failing our families.

Now, after breakfast dad might drive the kids to the school. In a vast majority of cases it's a public school and, after six years of this government, it's a school that is underfunded, understaffed and full of people who feel, to put it mildly, unappreciated. But at least it's open. Well, maybe it's open. Some days it's closed, thanks to the most poisonous education-labour climate in the history of Ontario.

Now, from the perspective of the working family, does this budget come to the rescue of these schools, of these children, of this family? No, it certainly does not and once again it fails working families. What it does instead

is it takes money that should go into public education and invests it in private schools. I can tell you that we on this side of the House do not believe that we should be using public money for private schools.

I gave the Minister of Education ample opportunity—in fact I gave her six separate and distinct opportunities during question period—to defend her policy. Not surprisingly, she couldn't.

If some families can afford the luxury of private schools, then more power to them. I don't have any objections to that. But with public education on the rocks, there are better uses for our public dollars. After six years of trying to drive our families out of public education, this government apparently now wants to pick up the tab for the limousine. What this amounts to is a voucher program for private schools. The government will try to cloak it under a different guise and try to tell us it's something decidedly different, but if we're giving parents taxpayer dollars so that they can take their kids and put them in private schools, that's what I call a voucher, and I believe the overwhelming majority of Ontarians would also call it a voucher.

We on this side of the House will continue to fight for public education on behalf of working families.

Once the children of this particular working family walk into school, they may join overcrowded classrooms. We put forward a positive plan to deal with that very issue. We believe there should be a cap on class sizes in the early grades, from junior kindergarten through to and including grade 3. That would be a good use of public education dollars. Think of that: no more than 20 students per class. I know you have children, Speaker, and like all Ontario parents you want nothing less than the very best public education for them. We want to help our children get off to a good start in school. We want them to learn how to learn right off the bat in the early grades.

The government could have taken that particular idea of ours, a cap of 20 students, JK through to grade 3, and they could have financed that through this budget. We would have applauded, because that would have been a good thing, a healthy development for working families and public education. Instead, this budget provides an additional \$2.2 billion in tax cuts for big business when our corporate taxes are already competitive when we compare them to our US neighbours.

Let's understand the juxtaposition here: crowded classrooms for our kids, \$2 billion more for Ontario's already competitive corporations. That's why we say this budget clearly fails our working families.

After school in this working family I've been talking about, one of the kids' asthma starts to act up, especially if it's hot or a muggy day, not unlike today. After all, as I've said before in this Legislature, Ontario's air is making our children sick.

Does this budget do anything to clean up our environment? It doesn't do a thing. What it does is fail our working families once more.

If that asthma becomes acute, our family may decide they've got to take their child to the doctor or the hospital. But does this budget tackle the doctor shortage? No, it does not. Does this budget ensure that the emergency room will be open and properly staffed when the family arrives? Does this budget take steps to bring back the thousands of nurses this government sent packing? No, it does not. We've got another \$2 billion-plus for corporations, but we have precious little to meet the needs of our working families.

At the end of the day, when the kids are home from school with another fundraising form tucked into their knapsacks—and I speak from experience on this front—the parents may find time to talk. They might talk about what they're going to do about an aging parent who needs home care or a nursing home. They might worry about how they're going to find that care. They might worry about how they're even going to pay for that care.

Oh, this budget promises them another income tax cut, but that pales next to what corporations are getting and it positively pales next to the other costs that they face and the other challenges that they face, challenges just like finding long-term care for a loved one.

I think clearly from any objective perspective, our working family's real, everyday life is not one iota better because of this budget. If you are a member of a working family, your tax cut is nothing compared to what corporations are getting, and it pales next to what's happening to your schools, your health care and your environment.

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This budget, to repeat, fails our working families, so much so that you're tempted to say that if you run a corporation in Ontario, if you've got kids in private school and you've got a big income, well, you win. You might say that, but if you did, you'd be wrong because you won't win for long. You see, for all the same reasons that this budget fails our working families, it also fails our very future. Simply put, this budget is based on the premise that all we need do in order to prosper is to ensure that our corporate taxes are the lowest in North America. Mike Harris has as his inspiration the objective of ensuring that we offer here in our province the lowest corporate taxes in North America—hardly a grand vision.

Our vision of a truly competitive economy, a prosperity that lasts, is much more far-sighted. We believe that to attract and keep jobs and investment we need the best-educated workforce in the world. But sadly, this budget invests \$300 million less in post-secondary education than we did five years ago. Just about every other province and state has boosted its investment in higher education, but not Ontario. It's a source of tremendous embarrassment.

I've had the occasion to do a bit of travelling recently outside the country and it's a tremendous source of embarrassment when we, the adult generation—those who have arrived, found success, benefited from all the public institutions that were laid at our feet by previous generations who worked so darn hard to have them there

for us—admit that on a per capita basis nobody invests less in the younger generation when it comes to post-secondary studies than we do here in Ontario.

To attract and keep jobs and investment, we need to realize that our publicly funded schools are the bedrock of our social and economic success. But this budget takes a half a billion dollars that could go into smaller class sizes—and the government maintains that their new voucher program is going to cost \$300 million. Mark my words: I maintain we're looking at half a billion dollars here easily. They want to take that money and put it into private schools.

To attract and keep jobs and investment, we need quality public health care. On average, the cost of doing business here compared to the US is \$2,500 cheaper per employee simply because we have medicare, because our health care system is publicly funded. But this budget, after six years of the Harris government, still offers no plan to improve access to health care and no plan to improve the quality of health care. The Premier tells us that he wants to ask now a number of questions and that he shouldn't be prevented from asking questions and that it might be unreasonable for us to place any kind of restrictions on him when it comes to the kinds of questions that he might want to put to the Ontario public when it comes to our health care.

You know what? He's been on the job for six years. He's had six years to carefully consider the questions and six years to carefully come up with good, progressive answers. He is failing us in health care and now he's looking to the private sector to rescue him. We've got something else in mind on that score and I'll be devoting some time, as will my caucus, and we'll be devoting a tremendous amount of energy in defence of publicly funded, universally accessible health care for all Ontarians.

To attract and keep jobs and investment, we need a modern infrastructure, but this budget invests less in our infrastructure—in roads, sewers and pipes—than we have in the last 15 years. The foundation is literally crumbling, yet this budget turns a blind eye to what must be done and instead invests in already competitive corporations and private schools.

To attract and keep jobs and investment we need livable, safe communities. But our cities and towns are struggling. They are struggling under the weight of this government's downloading.

Speaker, you understand this. People turn to their cities and towns and their communities for important services: for roads, for sewers, for libraries, for rec centres, for garbage pickup, for planning that creates neighbourhoods instead of just sprawl. Cities and towns are struggling, but this budget offers nothing to those cities and towns, nothing to create livable, safe, people-friendly communities.

Of course, we all recognize that we need taxes that are competitive, but our working families know, and I would argue that business today in Ontario knows in their heart

of hearts, everyone except this government seems to know, that we need more than competitive taxes alone.

What this budget should have done is it should have combined tax cuts targeted at our working families together with investments in public education, improved access to health care and clean air and safe and clean drinking water.

*Applause.*

**Mr McGuinty:** Thank you very much, above there.

Instead, it offers \$2.2 billion in corporate tax cuts when our corporate taxes were already competitive; and instead, it transfers half a billion dollars to private schools when our public schools are struggling to fulfill their oh so important responsibilities.

Instead of helping our working families, this budget is failing our working families. Instead of securing our future, it is failing our future. Instead of seizing the opportunity and presenting a bold new vision, it turns a blind eye to our real challenges.

We on this side of the House await the day that we will enjoy the privilege of delivering the budget that Ontario wants and deserves. We await the day we can deliver the budget that Ontario's working families want and deserve, and that will be a balanced budget in more ways than one.

Of course, we will ensure that we live within our means. As a father of four myself, I have no interest in saddling our children with our bills in the form of more debt. But our budget will also feature a balanced approach. It will balance targeted tax cuts aimed at working families with the investments that we must make for prosperity that lasts. It will help our families and our economy by facing the challenges that we all share.

Our budget will act to ensure that our children have the very best education. Our budget will ensure that our loved ones can count on the very best health care. Our budget will ensure that we clean up the water that we drink and the air that we breathe. Our budget will act to create safe and livable communities in which people are proud to live and raise their kids. Our budget will attract and keep the jobs and investment that will keep working families working, and that will be a budget that truly serves working families. That will be a budget that secures our future. That will be a budget that we can all be proud of.

With that, I wish to move an amendment to the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on May 9, which I will read as follows:

That "That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government," be amended by deleting the words after "That this House" and adding thereto the following:

Recognizing that this budget fails our families and our future by:

Introducing private school vouchers which jeopardize the future of public education of Ontario;

Putting the interests of corporations ahead of the interests of working families;

And by failing to make strategic investments such as a real cap on class sizes in the early grades, or measures to reduce the doctors' shortage, or a clean drinking water plan;

This House has lost confidence in this government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker:** All in favour? Agreed.

**Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio):** I move adjournment of the House.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe there's a late show that's been requested. Would this motion prevent that, or do we have to do this first?

**The Acting Speaker:** Yes. For clarification, it's my understanding that the late show will be put over until Tuesday automatically.

This House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1532.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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 Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr  
 Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers  
 Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller  
 Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman  
 Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergeant d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
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Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Beaches-East York	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Huron-Bruce	
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	<b>Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony</b> (PC) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée	Kenora-Rainy River	<b>Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Health and Long-Term Care) / ministre sans portefeuille (Santé et Soins de longue durée)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Gerretsen, John (L)
Burlington	<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron</b> (PC) Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées	Kitchener-Waterloo	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b> (PC) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Linlithgow-Carleton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)		<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.</b> (PC) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)		<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.</b> (PC) (PC) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Don Valley West / -Ouest	<b>Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David</b> (PC) Solicitor General / solliciteur général	Leeds-Grenville	<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne</b> (PC) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Tilson, David (PC)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Wood, Bob (PC)
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)		Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	London West / -Ouest	<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.</b> (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	London-Fanshawe	
Erie-Lincoln	<b>Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim</b> (PC) Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Loisirs	Markham	<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob</b> (PC) Minister of Correctional Services / ministre des Services correctionnels
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Mississauga East / -Est	Marland, Margaret (PC)
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b> (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		
Guelph-Wellington	<b>Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda</b> (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales		
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)		
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nepean-Carleton	<b>Baird, Hon / L'hon John R.</b> (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué au dossier de l'Enfance, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Scarborough East / -Est Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Gilchrist, Steve (PC) <b>Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan</b> (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Niagara Centre / -Centre Niagara Falls Nickel Belt Nipissing	Kormos, Peter (ND) Maves, Bart (PC) Martel, Shelley (ND) <b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.</b> (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif	Scarborough-Agincourt Scarborough-Rouge River Simcoe North / -Nord Simcoe-Grey	Phillips, Gerry (L) Curling, Alvin (L) Dunlop, Garfield (PC) <b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Northumberland Oak Ridges	Galt, Doug (PC) <b>Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip, deputy government House leader / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement, leader parlementaire adjoint	St Catharines St Paul's Stoney Creek	Bradley, James J. (L) Bryant, Michael (L) <b>Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad</b> (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Oakville	<b>Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary</b> (PC) Speaker / Président	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh Sudbury Thornhill	Clearay, John C. (L)  Bartolucci, Rick (L) Molinari, Tina R. (PC)
Oshawa Ottawa Centre / -Centre Ottawa-Orléans	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) Patten, Richard (L) <b>Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian</b> (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales	Thunder Bay-Atikokan Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord Timiskaming-Cochrane Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	McLeod, Lyn (L) Gravelle, Michael (L)  Ramsay, David (L) Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean Ottawa-Vanier Oxford Parkdale-High Park Parry Sound-Muskoka Perth-Middlesex Peterborough Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)  Boyer, Claudette (Ind) Hardeman, Ernie (PC) Kennedy, Gerard (L) Miller, Norm (PC) Johnson, Bert (PC) Stewart, R. Gary (PC) <b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet</b> (PC) Minister of Education, government House leader / ministre de l'Éducation, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Toronto-Danforth Trinity-Spadina Waterloo-Wellington Whitby-Ajax	Churley, Marilyn (ND) Marchese, Rosario (ND) Arnott, Ted (PC)  <b>Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances <b>Young, Hon / L'hon David</b> (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Prince Edward-Hastings Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke Sarnia-Lambton Sault Ste Marie Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Parsons, Ernie (L) Conway, Sean G. (L)  Di Cocco, Caroline (L) Martin, Tony (ND) Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	Willowdale  Windsor West / -Ouest Windsor-St Clair York Centre / -Centre York North / -Nord York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston York West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L) Duncan, Dwight (L) Kwinter, Monte (L) Munro, Julia (PC) Cordiano, Joseph (L)  Sergio, Mario (L)
		Vaughan-King-Aurora	Vacant

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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No. L15A



N° L15A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario

Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 14 May 2001

Lundi 14 mai 2001

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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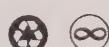
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3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 14 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 14 mai 2001

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### NORTHERN ECONOMY

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** Returning to northern Ontario on the weekend, northerners were asking me what was in the Harris budget for them. "Absolutely nothing," I had to say; in fact, that the Harris government totally ignored northern Ontario.

Alarming in its absence was any mention at all of any improvements in the northern Ontario health travel grant that my colleagues Rick Bartolucci, Mike Brown, Mike Gravelle, Lyn McLeod and myself have been working on for the last two years to try to get some equality between how you benefit southern Ontario cancer patients who have to travel versus northern Ontario cancer patients. It's a shame that wasn't addressed last week in that budget.

Another slap in the face to northern Ontarians is the 10% cut in highway construction. Not only do we have the most roads in Ontario up north, and it's vital for us to get to our jobs because we have to travel far, but they are in bad condition because of the severe weather we have in northern Ontario. In a slowing economy we also depend on the boost it gives the economy when we get good road construction contracts throughout the north. But what do we see? Cuts, in a climate of ever-escalating gas tax revenues. The money is there, folks.

The other thing is the heritage fund, with \$157 million sitting there unspent. We're not asking for new money. We're just saying, "Invest the money that you allocated last year into the north so it can be invested in northern Ontario so we can prosper." That money is there for a very definite purpose—to compensate for the resources that leave the north—and you're just sitting on it. So get that money invested into northern Ontario.

#### GERRY O'CONNOR

#### WATER TREATMENT PLANT

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I rise in the House today to announce the wonderful work that has been done in Belleville at the Gerry O'Connor Water Treatment Plant. Hardworking groups across Ontario,

such as the Belleville Utilities Commission, are working to ensure that the quality of drinking water meets the highest standards.

There has been a tremendous amount of work done to preserve the original style of the plant and also to upgrade the facility. The plant is the first in Canada to use dissolved air flotation technology in the pre-treatment process. Using innovative technology shows the commitment that Ontario has toward the environment.

Launching Operation Clean Water last August was done to ensure that there was safe drinking water across Ontario by creating high standards, frequent testing, prompt reporting and tough penalties. Our commitment to drinking water has allowed my government to contribute more than \$8 million toward this project and increase its size by more than 50%.

I would like to commend everyone involved in this project: the utilities commission, the municipality, the consulting engineer and the contractors.

I invite all those who can attend to join me in celebrating the official opening of the Gerry O'Connor Water Treatment Plant in Belleville, on Tuesday, May 15, at 3 pm. It's located at 2 Sidney Street.

#### CONTROL OF SMOKING

**Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** I want to lend my voice today to the urgent need for this government to act to develop a province-wide no-smoking policy in public spaces, one that levels the playing field while being fair to everyone.

Surely the time has come for the province to get their heads out of the sand and show some real leadership on this important health issue. The province has the authority under the Smoking in the Workplace Act and the Tobacco Control Act to champion this cause, but so far all we've heard from this government is that it's a municipal responsibility. Frankly, that's not good enough.

By comparison, our neighbours to the south of us have in 48 of 52 states now acted to place restrictions on smoking through statewide legislation. These laws range from simple limited restrictions such as designated areas to laws that limit or ban altogether smoking in public places. Whenever a particular state has decided upon a single standard, that standard is then applied to all municipalities.

In my riding, virtually every health professional and health association and business leader is telling me it's

time to take strong action on the impact of second-hand smoke. Recently, the mayors of Hamilton and Burlington have reiterated their desire to see province-wide standards. So too has the Hamilton and District Chamber of Commerce, and even the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, representing 159,000 small businesses. They want this government to establish a province-wide standard, and they want this to happen now.

#### HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** This morning, Premier Harris, along with Ministers Young and Jackson, honoured 13 Holocaust survivors for their contributions to Ontario. These individuals overcame unbelievable adversity and sorrow to achieve great things for their families and communities. We honour and celebrate the lives and successes of Ontarians who built our communities and gave hope to others. The experiences that they have endured can only inspire heartfelt admiration and respect for the Jewish community and its strength.

But today is not only a day to recognize the dark side of the human spirit; we must also celebrate the strength of those who left the Holocaust with nothing: no home, no hope, and in many cases no family. Despite this, they persevered. They started their lives anew. And what lives! Ontario's history is filled with that of people who contributed to family, to friends and to their communities, people who found inner strength to combat adversity and to make Ontario the great, inclusive, tolerant province we have today.

The Holocaust was truly one of the darkest periods in human history. Millions of people were persecuted for no reason other than their religious or political beliefs. It is vital that we recognize and remember the victims and the survivors of this terrible event. We must never forget.

#### DATE RAPE DRUGS

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** It was with some sadness that I saw that the victims' rights pioneer organization CAVEAT is ceasing its operations effective May 31. The Ontario Liberal caucus, and I know this whole House, salutes CAVEAT and all their efforts, and in particular their president, Priscilla de Villiers. CAVEAT, as I said, has done so much for victims' rights in the province of Ontario, including recently their final report, Vision: Action Today for a Safer Tomorrow.

They made two recommendations on date rape drugs. They recommended that every man and woman have the right to be tested for date rape drugs if that's a test that they seek, and that the government do everything it can to try and prevent and crack down on the high incidence of date rape drugs, particularly since it would appear that about one in four sexual assaults involves date rape drugs, but at the same time less than 10% of these victims are turning to the police. That means that 90% of them have no access to these tests.

That's why I've introduced into the Legislature, Mr Speaker, a resolution which I'll not read in its entirety right now, but be it resolved that every person in the province of Ontario ought to have the right to be tested for date rape drugs. That's not the way it is right now in the province of Ontario. I think that's wrong, and I'm calling upon the Attorney General today to reverse the government's policy and to provide every Ontarian the ability to be tested for date rape drugs.

Why? We can be tested for our cholesterol count. We can be tested for just about anything. This government wants to drug-test welfare recipients. Surely a man or woman can find out what's been done to their body the night after a sexual assault by being tested for date rape drugs.

1340

#### HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to reflect on a couple of events I attended last week. This is a little bit like a day in the life of an MPP.

It was a bit of a spiritual day. Many of the colleagues here in the House attended at the Ontario prayer breakfast last week, and I was there. We were, I think, all delighted to have the opportunity to hear Millard Fullard, the founder of Habitat for Humanity, who was the guest speaker at the Ontario prayer breakfast. Inspirational, no doubt. An amazing life story. A man who became a millionaire before the age of 30, he and his wife made life choices to give that all away and to dedicate themselves to a larger purpose. They founded Habitat for Humanity and believe that the issue of housing for all of God's children is critically important. It's now an amazing organization in countries around the world.

But later that day, the spiritual moment actually had a chance to grow bigger in my heart. That's when I attended the groundbreaking for the latest Habitat for Humanity project, which is taking place in the riding of Beaches-East York in the city of Toronto. It is the most aggressive and largest Habitat for Humanity project in North America. Normally they build single homes. In this case, they are building a five-unit townhouse plus a wheelchair-accessible detached bungalow.

The families were there. The corporate sponsors were there. The mentoring family partners were there. It was amazing. Millard Fullard was there. It was a day when the community came together, when our hearts were open and filled with joy. I look forward to welcoming those new residents into the riding of Beaches-East York.

#### TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I rise today to commemorate the first anniversary of the unknown soldier being brought home to Canada in May 2000. The remains of an unidentified Canadian soldier who died in the First World War were repatriated from France and

with great ceremony were buried in a special tomb in front of the National War Memorial in Ottawa.

The Royal Canadian Legion developed the idea as a millennium project, and it was taken up by the Canadian government under the lead of Veterans Affairs Canada.

The tomb of the unknown soldier has been created to honour the more than 116,000 Canadians who have sacrificed their lives in the cause of peace and freedom. Furthermore, the unknown soldier represents all Canadians, whether they be navy, army, air force or merchant marine, who died or may die for their country in all conflicts past, present and future.

The tomb of the unknown soldier is now the focal point of commemoration for all memorial events at the National War Memorial. It is a memorial in Canada for Canadians. The tomb is a fitting way to honour the sacrifices on which our freedoms were built.

Let all members of this House remember the contribution made to Canada by our veterans.

#### CONTROL OF SMOKING

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** More than 70 volunteers from not-for-profit associations are at Queen's Park today to demand action on anti-smoking initiatives. These are people who have been working tirelessly to build awareness of the health effects of both smoking and second-hand smoke, and they are getting frustrated at the lack of response from government.

The Harris government has all but ignored the two-year-old recommendations of its own expert panel on tobacco. The Premier said in March that he was committed to a strong tobacco control strategy, but his commitment clearly didn't include any funding in last week's budget. The budget did show that the increased federal taxes on tobacco were bringing another \$175 million into Ontario, but not a cent of that is being directed to new anti-smoking initiatives.

Mike Harris wants to talk about the soaring costs of health care, but he's apparently not interested in preventing illness. Smoking results in a cost to the health care system of \$1.1 billion annually while the treatment of smoking-related illnesses consumes a million hospital days a year. Smoking is implicated in 12,000 deaths annually, many times greater than the number of deaths from traffic accidents, suicides, homicides and AIDS combined. No wonder the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Lung Association, the Ontario Cancer Society and the Ontario Medical Association are distressed that the government's talk is so much louder than its actions. It's not surprising that the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco has given the Harris government failing grades on its tobacco control report card.

We know the Ministry of Health wants action. We know proposals for action were sent to the cabinet late last year. We know they've gone nowhere, buried somewhere under the \$2.2 billion in corporate tax cuts that show this government's real priority. The Harris government has \$175 million in increased tobacco

taxation. Let them use it to reduce deaths from smoking rather than siphon it off to the benefit of their big business friends.

#### IN CELEBRATION OF WOMEN AWARDS

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** On May 5, York region held a banquet called In Celebration of Women in support of the Ontario breast cancer screening program at the Southlake Regional Health Centre.

The celebration, the creation of Diane Humeniuk, York regional councillor for Newmarket, recognized the achievements of women in York region, including my riding of York North, by giving out 36 awards to women who have done outstanding work in their communities. Those awards were based on their impact, longevity, quality and other acknowledgements for their contributions. Categories included education, environment, native women leadership and humanitarian awards.

The festive evening ended with the highest honour, the Woman of the Year Award. I would like to congratulate the winner, Anne Pegg, for her remarkable 40 years of volunteering in Georgina. Her credits include 38 years in the Sutton Agricultural Society, the Red Barn Theatre and the Georgina Citizen of the Year Award for 2000. Congratulations to Anne and to all award recipients.

I would like to conclude with a quote by Peggy Anderson which captures the spirit of great women and the In Celebration of Women banquet: "Great women are not considered so because of personal achievements but for the effect their efforts have had on the lives of countless others. From daring feats of bravery to the understated ways of a compassionate heart, great women possess a common strength of character. Through their passion and persistence, they have advanced womanhood and the world."

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (DRIVING WHILE SUSPENDED), 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (CONDUITE PENDANT UNE SUSPENSION)

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 47, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to increase the penalties for driving with a suspended licence / Projet de loi 47, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour accroître les peines pour conduite pendant une suspension de permis.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** The bill increases the penalty and the period of licence suspension to be imposed when a person is convicted more than once of certain offences under the Criminal Code set out in section 41 of the Highway Traffic Act.

It also increases the period of licence suspension to be imposed under section 42 when a person is convicted more than once of operating a motor vehicle, vessel or aircraft or any railway equipment in Canada while disqualified from doing so, contrary to subsection 259(4) of the Criminal Code; or is convicted more than once of prescribed offences under a law of a state of the United States.

A vehicle used in the commission of an offence must be seized and sold if the owner's licence is suspended more than once under section 41 or 42. The judge or court may also be satisfied that the person convicted owned the vehicle at the time of the offence and still owns the vehicle. If not, the person convicted is subject to a fine equal to the value of the vehicle used in the commission of the offence. In either case, the proceeds may be used to finance programs that, in the opinion of the Attorney General, promote safe driving, such as MADD.

1350

#### INQUIRY INTO POLICE INVESTIGATIONS

OF SEXUAL ABUSE AGAINST MINORS  
IN THE CORNWALL AREA ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 PRÉVOYANT UNE ENQUÊTE SUR LES ENQUÈTES POLICIÈRES RELATIVES AUX PLAINTES DE MAUVAIS TRAITEMENTS D'ORDRE SEXUEL INFLIGÉS À DES MINEURS DANS LA RÉGION DE CORNWALL

Mr Guzzo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 48, An Act to establish a commission of inquiry to inquire into the investigations by police forces into sexual abuse against minors in the Cornwall area / Projet de loi 48, Loi visant à créer une commission chargée d'enquêter sur les enquêtes menées par des corps de police sur les plaintes de mauvais traitements d'ordre sexuel infligés à des mineurs dans la région de Cornwall.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The member for a short statement?

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean):** The best medical evidence available indicates that pedophilia cannot be cured. This bill does not concern itself with punishment or retribution. This bill speaks to the issue of protection of young people in eastern Ontario, particularly in the Cornwall area, and particularly those who, as I speak, remain under the influence and direction of known pedophiles.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In view of the seriousness of

this issue, I would ask for unanimous consent that we pass second and third readings of Mr Guzzo's bill.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

#### HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (CELLULAR PHONES), 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (TÉLÉPHONES CELLULAIRES)

Mr O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 49, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit the use of phones and other equipment while driving on a highway / Projet de loi 49, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour interdire l'utilisation de téléphones et d'autres équipements pendant la conduite sur une voie publique.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** All police associations have written that the number one rule in safe driving is to limit distractions and keep both hands on the wheel.

Just recently, a police report in Durham reported that "At approximately 4:05 pm on Monday, May 7, 2001, a fatal motor vehicle collision involving a pickup truck and CP freight train occurred on Brock Road North in the city of Pickering."

To quote police, "Driver inattention is believed to have caused this collision. Police have learned that Mr Schewe was talking on a cellular telephone at the moment of impact."

In light of recent incidents on Ontario roadways and the success of the Ontario Provincial Police Operation Distraction, it is clear that the use of hand-held cellphones and communication devices interferes with the safe operation of motor vehicles.

This bill would amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit the use of hand-held cellphones and other electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle. Specific exemptions are provided for emergencies.

The bill further legislates the reporting of motor vehicle accidents caused by the use of hand-held communication devices.

This bill promotes safe transportation on our Ontario highways.

#### MOTIONS

#### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet tonight, Monday, May

14, 2001, from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1354 to 1359.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes
Clark, Brad
Clement, Tony
Coburn, Brian
Cunningham, Dianne
Dunlop, Garfield
Ecker, Janet
Elliott, Brenda
Galt, Doug
Gill, Raminder
Guzzo, Gary J.
Hardeman, Ernie
Jackson, Cameron
Johns, Helen

Johnson, Bert
Klees, Frank
Maves, Bart
Mazzilli, Frank
Miller, Norm
Molinari, Tina R.
Munro, Julia
Mushinski, Marilyn
Newman, Dan
O'Toole, John
Runciman, Robert W.
Sampson, Rob

Snobelen, John
Spina, Joseph
Stewart, R. Gary
Stockwell, Chris
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tilson, David
Tsubouchi, David H.
Turnbull, David
Wettlaufer, Wayne
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wood, Bob
Young, David

**The Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays
Agostino, Dominic
Bartolucci, Rick
Bisson, Gilles
Boyer, Claudette
Bradley, James J.
Brown, Michael A.
Bryant, Michael
Caplan, David
Churley, Marilyn
Colle, Mike
Conway, Sean G.

Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario
Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley
Di Cocco, Caroline	McLeod, Lyn
Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted
Duncan, Dwight	Peters, Steve
Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Lankin, Frances	Smitherman, George
Levac, David	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 37; the nays are 32.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Because it is Police Week, I am asking for unanimous consent to have second and third reading of Bill 22, An Act to protect Children involved in Prostitution, as we all know it would help the police in carrying out their duties.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I heard some noes.

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Given that it is Police Week, I ask for unanimous consent for second and third reading of Bill 23, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to require a driver's licence to be suspended if a motor vehicle is used when purchasing sexual services from a child.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I heard some noes.

**Mr Bartolucci:** On a point of order, Speaker: Because it is Police Week, I would ask for unanimous consent for second and third reading of Bill 24, An Act to amend the Municipal Act with respect to adult entertainment parlours, which would help the police immeasurably in the execution of their duties.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I heard some noes.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### POLICE WEEK

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** Earlier this afternoon I joined with police and municipal representatives at the Toronto Police Service headquarters to launch Police Week in Ontario.

This year, the policing community in Ontario is celebrating Police Week from May 13 to May 19. This week provides the residents of Ontario with an opportunity to express their gratitude to the men and women who work to make our streets and communities safe.

I invite all members of the Legislature to join with me in recognizing the contributions and sacrifices made by municipal and provincial police officers across Ontario.

On May 6, I had the honour to participate in the province's second annual remembrance ceremony at the Ontario Police Memorial here at Queen's Park. It was a moving ceremony, attended by the Lieutenant Governor, Premier Harris and the families and colleagues of fallen officers. The remembrance ceremony provides an opportunity to remember those brave officers who have given their lives while serving the people of Ontario. The memorial and indeed the Police Week itself give us an opportunity to express our gratitude for the contributions made by the province's police services, both past and present. We know that sometimes in fulfilling their duties, police can face great danger. As community members, it's important that we have the opportunity to show our respect and gratitude to those officers and their families who have made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty.

A year ago, the memorial was unveiled and the first annual service for fallen officers was held. At that time 200 names were inscribed on the wall. This special observance will continue each year on the first Sunday of May. This year we proudly, yet sadly, add the names of 11 officers to the memorial, including Sergeant Margaret Eve who made the ultimate sacrifice last June. The other 10 officers who were identified for the memorial service served as recently as 1986 and as long ago as 1893. Let us pray we won't have to add any more names to the memorial when we gather together next spring.

Families in Ontario have a right to feel safe in their communities. This sense of safety is dependent on the work of our police services. Every day, police officers

are on our streets and our highways preventing crime, apprehending criminals and assisting victims. At the memorial, we remember those who have given their lives for us.

It's also important this week and throughout the year to pause and pay special tribute to the more than 20,000 police officers currently serving across the province. They have made a personal commitment to make our communities safe, and they put their lives on the line every time they report for duty.

While police officers are hard at work on the front lines, our government has made a commitment to provide them with the tools that they need to fight crime. We have enacted Christopher's Law, establishing Canada's first sex offender registry; the Safe Streets Act, stopping aggressive panhandling; the Sergeant Rick McDonald Memorial Act, introducing stiff new penalties for drivers fleeing police; and the Imitation Fire Arms Regulations Act, restricting the sale and purchase of imitation firearms in the province. In addition, last week's budget allocated \$6 million to specialized and legal resources to fight organized crime.

Under the community policing partnership program, we have allocated funding to add 1,000 net new front-line police officers in the province. Through the Partners Against Crime program, we have invested \$967,000 from the proceeds of crime to fund aircraft projects in four police services, and the government has invested \$5 million to upgrade DNA lab facilities to reduce turnaround time of results.

With the support of thousands of police officers across the province and in partnership with other stakeholders, we are winning the battle against crime. I know that all members in this House join me in sending a message of appreciation to police officers across the province. I call on all members of the House to join me in saluting Ontario's police services.

#### CREUTZFELDT-JAKOB DISEASE

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Last week I addressed the Legislature in relation to a potential Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease matter at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital in Windsor. I can report to the House that a risk assessment was conducted and shared with ministry staff, local medical officers of health, Health Canada, hospitals in Windsor and London, other scientific experts and the public. I know that all members of the House are pleased with the outcome of this assessment.

The neurosurgical instruments used at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital in Windsor are no longer being used. I am advised that other surgical instruments that were routinely sterilized and used in the hospital between March 13 and May 11 are considered to be at extremely low risk for contamination.

I wish to advise the Legislature that Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital in Windsor may experience some financial pressures related to replacing surgical equipment. I

would like to assure the Legislature at this time that my ministry is working to assess the needs of the hospital and will provide the required financial assistance to maintain quality patient services.

1410

#### POLICE WEEK

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** Today we mark the beginning of Police Week. I am honoured to speak on behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus.

From yesterday, May 13, until Sunday, May 19, the citizens and the communities across the province are being invited to make themselves more aware of the services provided by Ontario police, services that are sometimes unfortunately taken for granted until an emergency arises and we call upon these brave men and women to assist.

Our police officers also act in a proactive way.

We also need to take this time to reflect on the tremendous job that men and women in uniform do, day in and day out, protecting our communities and keeping our hard-working families safe.

I was also honoured to be present and to represent the Liberal caucus at the remembrance ceremony. This ceremony is out of respect for the families as well as the fallen officers. To them we offer our heartfelt thanks, our gratitude and our prayers.

In the provincial Legislature, Police Week is a time to reflect to make sure that we, as elected officials, are providing support to those on the front lines when it comes to giving them the tools that are needed to do their job.

Today, the Solicitor General handed over a cheque to the Toronto police chief in order to hire more front-line officers. This is a start to regain losses. However, this is not keeping up with the number of police officers retiring, and therefore the number of police on the front line is actually decreasing. In fact, there are 400 fewer officers on the streets of Toronto today than there were in 1992.

Recent Statistics Canada figures show that actual police officers on the street between 1995 and 2000 are down 2.3% per capita in the province of Ontario.

Both Project P and our anti-organized-crime units are woefully underresourced and need the provincial government to support them in this very important work. Fourteen members of Project P to wipe out pornography in the entire province of Ontario is not good enough.

In addition, the families of police officers need this government's support by protecting them from organized crime. That is why I have introduced the Protecting the Privacy of Criminal Justice Personnel Act. Police officers must be free to do their job without fear of reprisal or intimidation directed at their families as well as themselves.

In conclusion, I congratulate the police of Ontario for the job that they do during this week and every week of the year. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus

appreciate it. We all appreciate it. Municipalities appreciate it. We deserve to have the best possible protection for the citizens and the hard-working people of Ontario.

Let's make sure they have the tools to do the job that they need to do.

#### CREUTZFELDT-JAKOB DISEASE

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** On behalf of my colleagues from Windsor West, Windsor-St Clair, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus, I am pleased to respond to the comments of the Minister of Health with regard to the potential Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease matter at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital in Windsor.

I am particularly pleased today that the minister has assured us that his staff is working to assess the needs of the hospital and will provide the required financial assistance to maintain quality patient services, as suggested by my colleague from Windsor-St Clair last week.

I would also like to reiterate how we appreciate the minister having kept us advised of this situation—those being the residents of Windsor-Essex county, and the province, for that matter—and the assistance and professional way that everyone involved in this has worked: the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit; Mr Frank Bagatto, the CEO of the Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital; the surgical and nursing staff. All of the professional people involved in this have worked together to assure the residents of Windsor-Essex county, and indeed those of the province, of the seriousness of the situation and yet how there was really, because of procedures taken, a minimal cause for concern in the end.

Last but not least, our prayers and our thoughts are with the patient who initially was affected by this issue and anyone who in the meantime may have suffered any stress. To all those involved, I think everybody worked in a professional, sincere and compassionate manner, and we appreciate that very much.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** I have two brief comments in response to the Minister of Health. First, today he made a commitment to provide the required financial assistance to maintain quality patient services at Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital in Windsor. We hope that translates into the actual cost of purchasing the new equipment and that there won't be a system of haggling here. Those are not the words he used, and we'd like some assurances on that.

Second, last week I raised the general policy question with respect to the increasing trend of hospitals using shared services, in this case equipment. We're glad the risk assessment shows that the risk is less than it might have been. I've asked him to clarify for this House what the ministry's policy is with respect to that. I would hope the next time he rises on this that he will respond to that point.

#### POLICE WEEK

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** New Democrats are pleased to join in this message of pride for our police here in Ontario as we commence Police Week in this province.

We want police officers in communities across this province to understand the high regard in which we hold police officers, and I'm pleased to join with the Solicitor General in speaking to those police officers, their families and the communities they serve in indicating very clearly that the people, the residents, the citizenry of our communities value their police highly.

But I regret the Solicitor General's rather partisan ending to his comments, because I would ask the Solicitor General and, quite frankly, police officers in this province to take note of the fact that while we supported with enthusiasm Christopher's Law, the New Democratic Party moved amendments that would have toughened Christopher's Law to ensure that all sex offenders in the province would be included in that registry, not just the selected range of sex offenders that the government proposed. You see, the government voted down the NDP amendments that would have improved the effectiveness of Christopher's Law.

New Democrats tried to strengthen the Sergeant Rick McDonald Memorial Act, again with tougher penalties, the same sort of penalties that police officers have been asking for, but the government voted down those amendments moved by the New Democrats that would have toughened the Sergeant Rick McDonald Memorial Act.

New Democrats tried to toughen up the Imitation Firearms Regulation Act, but the government wouldn't support us in our efforts to make that law tougher; in fact, the government did no more than adopt the Liberal bill, which has loopholes so big you can drive a truck through them and has imitation toy firearms still in proliferation across this province, in the hands not only of criminals but of children as well. Again, that was contrary to what police officers wanted and asked for.

New Democrats are proud to stand with the cops of this province, the women and men who in every community, big and small, not only, as the Solicitor General would say, are sometimes exposed to grave danger, but I suggest to you are oftentimes exposed to great danger. If we're going to pay tribute to our cops, let's make sure that as a Parliament—and I tell this government to ensure that it fulfills its responsibility to ensure that police forces are properly staffed, because we've seen a reduction in the number of police per capita in this province since the election of the Mike Harris government.

I put it to this government, the Mike Harris Tories, that it's incumbent upon them to ensure that police forces have adequate resources, that they have the technology and the tools to enable them to do their job, because police are under great pressure from the community. In any democratic society, as in ours, police are held to high

standards, and the police understand that, but when the police officers of our communities aren't given the tools and the resources to do their jobs effectively, one has to understand the frustration, the incredible lack of morale that permeates many police forces, and the frustration that those police officers feel.

I suggest to this Solicitor General that he may never have visited communities like Fort Albany or Attawapiskat, Ogaki or Peawanuck. I joined my colleague the member from Timmins-James Bay there last year, and I saw native policing services, NAPS, not only with broken tools but with no tools, one-person police forces, boats without motors, snowmobiles without motors. We're talking about one-person police forces that are called upon to protect their communities, to investigate and assist in the prosecution of crime. This government won't even give them justices of the peace to enable them to access arrest warrants and detention orders.

This government, I put to you, has not been a friend of police officers or of safer communities in this province. It certainly has been an outright foe of the north and those native communities that rely upon this government to resource and staff their native policing services.

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#### HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe I have unanimous consent to do an all-party statement on Yom HaShoah.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon Mr Jackson:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I'm pleased to join all members of the House in recognizing Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Memorial Day. It is a day when the Jewish community all over the world lights candles to honour the people who survived the Holocaust, those monstrous events of the Second World War that have scarred humankind for all time.

This government proclaimed Bill 66 in 1998, an act that provides a day in each year to honour Holocaust survivors. I'd like to thank the member for Halton. Ontario is the first government outside of Israel to have recognized this important day in history. The date is determined annually by the Jewish lunar calendar, which occurred this year on April 19.

This morning, I had the privilege of hosting, along with our Premier and my colleague the Honourable David Young, the government's commemoration of Yom HaShoah by honouring 13 Holocaust survivors. This event was also made possible by the ongoing efforts of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem. The Israeli Knesset established Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, in 1953, and it functions as a living memorial museum. It stands as a repository of the documented history of one of the 20th century's most tragic events. Not only our Premier but former Premier Bob Rae and I believe Monte Kwinter in

the House have all had occasion to visit this hallowed ground.

Earlier today, in a ceremony that was touching and inspirational and enriched by the pride of families and friends, we presented from the people of Ontario scrolls to these 13 remarkable survivors to mark this important day. Many of the honourees and their families stayed for lunch, and some are still here in the gallery with us today. We are all enriched by your contribution to this province. Most of you arrived here with little more than your indomitable spirit. You worked, established businesses and raised your families in a new world, a world free from fear and free from tyranny.

At this morning's ceremony, I outlined a summary of each individual, their astonishing lives, their heroic stories and their accomplishments. Their stories touched our hearts profoundly. Your stories represent courage, dignity and faith and an overwhelming determination to conquer the evil you faced day by day, moment by moment, in those dark times.

Some of you were small children when your lives were snatched up by oppressors, some of you were young adults, but all of you were victims of unspeakable crimes and all of you miraculously triumphed.

These special honourees are in the House with us, and I'd like to read into the record of this Legislature for our history the names of each of these courageous people: Leo and Sarah Beliak, Jenny Eisenstein, Cantor Morris Goldlust, Saul Thilchik, Elias Kleimer, Theodore Libfeld, who is honoured posthumously by his wife, Lorraine, Andy Lichtenberg, George Metz, Faye Schulman, Fela Shapiro, Irving Stal and Sam Weisberg.

I'd like to point out that the word "shoah" is the Hebrew word for "whirlwind." It is used to describe the horrific deeds that swept across Europe against the Jews. The tragic toll was six million souls—and one million children—a population more than half the size of our province. In addition to this devastating number were many others who were targeted for their race, for their religion, their physical and their mental disabilities and for their sexual orientation. It is the fervent belief of the people of the world, however, that such a whirlwind will never touch down again on any soil at any time.

In Ontario we take our freedom for granted because we have inherited this. But these 13 brave people we honour today lost their freedom and, horrifically, lost most of their family members and many of their friends and neighbours for reasons that no rational mind can ever contemplate.

During those dreadful years, the courageous people who survived did so with superhuman inner strength. Valiantly, they summoned upon their own spirituality and their innermost resources to survive. Though they had lost so much in a material sense—their homes, their businesses and family treasures—they lost something far more valuable: their fundamental freedom to practise their religion, the freedom to live without fear of persecution.

We must never forget. We must be vigilant. We cannot lose sight of the fact for a moment that freedom is everyone's right, not a privilege for the selected few.

The loss of freedom reminds us that we live in a community of many communities, in a diversely harmonious province, in a land where each and every one of us enjoys the ultimate freedom: the freedom from tyranny and oppression.

This is ours to cherish: to be who we are, to practise our many religions, to live in harmony with our neighbours. These freedoms are such an integral part of our lives we seldom think of them.

To our 13 honourees today, I want to say to them once more in the House that this government recognizes your profound sacrifice and is proud to honour you for making a life in our province, for endowing your children and grandchildren with the legacy of your courage, and through you we all learn about tolerance and understanding and are reminded that we must not overlook the wealth of Ontario's many cultures in our neighbourhoods, in our towns and in our cities. You represent to us in the strongest and most heartfelt manner that we cannot and will not ever again forget.

The province of Ontario honours you 13 valued, special citizens. But in truth, you honour all Ontarians with your courage and your dignity.

**Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre):** Today we commemorate Yom HaShoah, Vehagvurah, Holocaust Memorial Day. Ontario has the distinction of being the first jurisdiction outside of Israel to pass an act proclaiming Holocaust Memorial Day. This act also calls for the enhancement of Holocaust and anti-discrimination education which will enrich our Ontario heritage and mosaic.

As we already heard at the ceremony this morning, in conjunction with Yad Vashem, we honoured and recognized 13 survivors of the Holocaust for the eighth time in this Legislature. I want to use this opportunity to make it an educational experience for all of us and recount the story of Chiune Sugihara, one of the most important rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust. An estimated 40,000 descendants of the Jewish refugees he saved are alive today because of his courageous actions.

The story of Chiune Sugihara is among the most remarkable to come out of the Second World War. In the fall of 1939, Chiune Sugihara was sent by the Japanese government to Kaunas, now known as Kovno, in Lithuania. He was sent there to open a consulate.

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By 1940, much of Europe had been conquered by the Nazis, who imposed increasingly harsh anti-Jewish measures. Many Polish Jews fled from Poland to Lithuania, where Consul Sugihara was approached to help in a complicated plan to enable the Jews to flee the Nazi Holocaust. They told the Japanese diplomat that two Dutch colonies, Curaçao in the Caribbean and Surinam in South America, did not require formal entrance visas for foreign travellers. To get to these Dutch colonies, however, one needed to travel through the Soviet Union

and Japan. Not only did Sugihara agree to help; he convinced the Soviet consul to issue transit visas as well. Three times, Sugihara wired Tokyo for permission to issue the visas. Three times he was turned down.

He then had to make the most difficult decision of his professional and political life. That was to either obey his superiors or issue the visas. He chose on his own to issue thousands of visas, and for a month he spent endless hours handwriting these visas.

After receiving their visas, thousands of Jews sailed to Kobe, Japan. Then most of the Jews went on to Shanghai, China, where they survived the war. I've had the opportunity of visiting where they were in Shanghai. They established a total community there, and from there left to travel to the west years after the war.

After the war, when Mr Sugihara returned to Japan, he was unceremoniously dismissed from the diplomatic service. Once a rising star in the Japanese diplomatic service, Sugihara's career as a diplomat was shattered. After the war, Mr Sugihara and his wife never spoke about their wartime deeds. Amazingly, it wasn't until 30 years later that many survivors came forward to testify to Yad Vashem in Israel about Mr Sugihara's humanitarian initiative.

In 1985, Chiune Sugihara was recognized as "righteous among the nations" by the Yad Vashem Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem.

Notwithstanding that he knew it would destroy his career, Sugihara was asked why he did it. He replied that they were human beings and they needed help. "I'm glad I found the strength to make the decision to give it to them."

Mr Sugihara joins many, like Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg, who went out of their way, at great risk to themselves, to show that they can set the standard for man's humanity to man. It is that drive and that commitment that we must always remember so the world will never forget.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Isaiah, chapter 56, verse 5, says, "To them will I give in my House and within my walls a memorial ... an everlasting name"—a yad vashem—"that shall not be cut off."

Isaiah's words call the world to remembrance of her fallen children, and we are honoured to have among us today a group of amazing men and women whose life experiences have touched us all. By sharing their stories of suffering and survival with us, they honour those who died. We join with them in remembering. We must not let the horror of the Holocaust be forgotten. Their testimony serves to remind all of us of our responsibility to ensure that death and suffering in our world comes to an end.

For over 40 years, beginning in 1955, the museum of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem has been collecting the names and biographical information of the over six million Jews who were murdered during the Holocaust. Surviving family members and Jewish communities around the world have carried forward the work of remembering the

names of those whose lives were so brutally cut short. They understood that the victims of Hitler's orchestrated slaughter must not be relegated to mere statistics. Today, the lives of many Jews who died have been preserved in permanent memory. Their identities echo through the Hall of Names, testifying to the horror and reminding us of our responsibility to never let it happen again.

Canadians have a close association with Yad Vashem in Jerusalem because Canadian architect Moshe Safdie contributed to its design. I'm told that he built the entrance into the museum as a bridge to carry visitors from the everyday world into the sanctity of the memorial site, allowing people to mentally prepare themselves for the experience of remembering.

Yad Vashem is relevant to all of us because its goal is to make people think. But thinking, indeed remembering, is not enough. It is our duty to all Holocaust victims, living or dead, to bring about whatever justice can be served in the aftermath of this great human tragedy. As public figures, we must condemn those who would deny the suffering and murder of millions. As legislators, we must relentlessly pursue war criminals living in our midst.

The western world learned a lesson from the terrible events of the Holocaust. We learned that freedom is tenuous. We learned that what happens in our neighbour's backyard is our concern. We learned that we cannot turn our backs on our fellow human beings. In the wake of Nazism, countries across the globe joined forces against the scourge of racism and tyranny.

In 1945, the United Nations declared the protection of human rights and freedoms an international responsibility. This translation of the fundamental principles of life and liberty into international law was one of the greatest victories in the western world. This is a lesson we must continue to teach. We must be forever vigilant.

We know that our world remains a violent and oppressive place for too many people. Countries continue to sentence their citizens to death; military violence is too often used against a country's own citizens; people still live in incredible poverty, without access to food and shelter; aboriginal people are refused title to their land; children are denied access to education. One need not look far beyond our borders to find injustice. We know all too well that abuses of basic human rights happen here in Canada, one of the greatest countries on earth.

Today we remember the sacrifices of those men and women who suffered and died during the blackest period of modern history, but this day serves to remind us all of what they have accomplished. Today we remember our responsibilities to each other. Today is about recommitting ourselves to the task of making the world a safe place for everyone, no matter their race, their religion, their gender or their age.

To those in the gallery with us, I want to tell you that I am both humbled and inspired by your courage. I think it is nearly impossible for any of us to fully contemplate what you experienced in your young lives. Your will to survive, your strength and your commitment to your

fellow human beings are truly remarkable. I thank you for turning your tragedies and hardships into something positive. We all benefit from your contribution to making sure it never happens again.

**Hon Mr Jackson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I was hoping we would do a moment's silence.

**The Speaker:** Would all our friends and members please kindly rise for a moment of silence.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker:** I thank all the members and our honoured guests as well.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just before we begin question period, we have as guests some volunteers and staff from the Ontario Lung Association, the Canadian Cancer Society and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario who are joining us here today for question period as well.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Education. I want to return to your vouchers-for-private-schools program. Last week when I asked you to defend your proposal to take \$500 million out of public education and invest that in private schools, I gave you six separate opportunities to defend your policy, and you refused every opportunity. I want to try again.

Madam Minister, you have, through your government's policies, brought public education in Ontario to its knees. It is at risk. We have overcrowded classrooms. We have parents raising money out there for fundamental school supplies like textbooks. You have slashed special education programs, English-as-a-second-language programs, even adult education programs.

Once again on behalf of Ontario's working families, why is it in their interests and in the interests of their children and in the interests of their children's public education that you take \$500 million and invest it in elite private schools like Upper Canada College?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** First of all, I would disagree with the honourable member. What we have done with public education in this province is to bring it more accountability and more quality through a better, tougher, more rigorous curriculum, through standardized testing, through a whole range of initiatives. Student testing, teacher testing, increased resources, all of those things have been done to increase and strengthen the public education system.

The budget is very clear that commitment to public education continues. We have made new investments. We will continue to make new investments. We will also continue to move forward on the other promises and commitments we made to the parents, to hard-working families in Ontario, to make sure we have a results-based, excellent system that will give our young people what they need to succeed.

**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, I'm keeping count, and so are working families. I've put seven questions to you; I've asked you seven times over to defend your policy about taking public money and putting it into private, elite schools like Upper Canada College, and you refuse, presumably because you cannot defend the indefensible.

Even the people who run the private schools think your private school vouchers will cause damage to our public schools. Listen to what Natalie Little, the head of Bishop Strachan, had to say: "The Harris government has done the exact opposite of what we know works. Schools improve when you put resources into them. This could undermine the strength of our future citizens. I don't think anyone has thought that through."

Madam Minister, our working families don't want you to abandon their children's public education. They want you to champion their children's public education. They want you to commit yourself to improving public education for their children.

I ask you now for the eighth time, on behalf of Ontario's working families: why is it in the interests of our working families and their children and in the interests of public education that you take \$500 million and invest that in private, elite schools like Upper Canada College?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I would like to remind the honourable member that he might want to check his facts. Here we go; Liberal research again. No one is advocating spending \$500 million in elite private schools. Contrary to the Liberal Party, we have this very strange belief here that parental choice is very important, that the voice of parents in education is very important.

I know you don't agree with that. I know you fought our education reforms in the public system to give our parents a stronger voice on school councils, to let them have a say in safe schools policies, in turnaround plans for schools. We respect that parental choice. We also respect that parental choice of those parents who wish to have their children educated in their culture or in their religion. I know the honourable member has said to the Jewish families and the Muslim families and the Christian families and the Hindu families and the Sikh families that their choices don't matter to him. They do matter to this caucus.

**Mr McGuinty:** That was eight, and nine is on the way. The question again is very simple: why is it that you believe it's a good thing to take \$500 million in public dollars and invest that in private schools? That's the question.

This is what the Premier said during the last provincial election campaign. "We want a public education system that Ontario parents and families have so much confidence in that they'll never want to send their children to any other private school or any other system." He went on to say, "When I was asked in one of the communities would I support their call for a voucher system, I said no."

That was a very important campaign commitment. That was a very important campaign promise, and voters, working parents in particular, relied on that specific campaign promise. Clearly, you've broken the promise; that is not an issue. So for the ninth time, on behalf of working families, tell us, why is it a good thing to take \$500 million that could be spent in public education for working families and their children and put it into elite private schools like Upper Canada College?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member can keep repeating this as long as he wants, but repeating it doesn't make it true. No one is investing \$500 million in this province in elite private schools—period, end of story.

Do you know what? Also, to the honourable member, those commitments stand. We are working to make the public education system the best not only in this country but around the world, so parents do not have to take their children anywhere else. They can have them in the public education system where they can benefit from the new curriculum, the standardized tests, the teacher testing, the safe schools—all those initiatives that this government promised, that this government is delivering on, and that that party over there fought every step of the way.

You don't support any of the public education reforms we've brought in. You don't support parental choice. You don't put the facts on the table for the parents so they can judge for themselves.

We stand by our commitments, as we said we would.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** New question.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, I've given you nine separate opportunities and you've turned all nine down.

You have now been visited by the aftermath of your policy. You have now come to understand, hopefully, that you have shown terrible judgment. Your plan to help parents and kids to elite private schools like Upper Canada College has been universally condemned.

Can you give us any glimmer of hope? Can you tell us that you are now prepared to reconsider this particular aspect of your policy where you're going to send money to elite private schools? Can you tell us now? Because working parents are very upset by this policy. They want their tax dollars to go into their children's public schools. Can you tell us that, at a minimum, their tax dollars won't go to elite private schools like Upper Canada College?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** For the 10th time, I am not going to confirm something that the honourable member knows is not accurate.

First of all, of course this is a controversial move. I haven't met a change in education in my lifetime, put

forward by any government, that hasn't met with controversy. The difference between this government and the party across the way is that not only are we doing what we said we'd do, not only are we delivering on our quality reforms to public education, but we have the courage to make changes, we have the courage to put those out, where the honourable member and his party members have been on both sides of every educational reform that we have brought in.

Ontario's hard-working families want an education system that will give their children what their children need: the school up the street, the school in their town. They want to know how well their school is doing. They want a good curriculum. They want good teachers. All of those are things that our government remains committed to doing. Putting more money in the classroom: over \$360 million, as the honourable—

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up. Supplementary?

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**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, bluster just isn't going to work this time. Ontario is very upset. This is a profound change in education policy. You're talking upwards of \$500 million. There is no separate bill here. There was no public consultation. There was no debate of any kind. In fact, during the course of the election, the Premier specifically said he would never, ever do this. And now, apparently, Madam Minister, it is being done.

Maybe there are groups out there and individuals that we're not aware of, and I'm going to ask you now to put their names on the record. Could you please tell us the names of groups or individuals who support a policy—and listen to my question, please, Madam Minister, very carefully—that would send public dollars to elite private schools like Upper Canada College? Could I have the names, please, of organizations or groups or individuals?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, I'd be very surprised if we would find anyone who would support taking money for elite private schools. What we have lots of support for is supporting parental choice. The hard-working families out there that the honourable member likes to be so proud he defends, those hard-working families in ridings that even some of your members try to represent, the Muslim families, the Christian families, the Sikh families, the Hindu families—I like the way the honourable member tries to say that somehow or other the Muslim school that's in my riding, that Jewish school that is in the riding of some of your own members, is some elite institution.

All he has to do is to turn around, look behind him at some of his own caucus members, at some of their own people in the ridings that they represent to find many, many parents and groups who believe that parental choice is very important, whether they are in the public education system or whether they choose to—

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up. Final supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** I've given the minister 11 separate opportunities to defend her policy which would send public dollars to elite private schools like Upper Canada

College. She refuses to address that issue. I then asked her if she might give us a list of names of either individuals or organizations who support that specific policy, and she's not able to produce a single one.

Let me tell you about that aspect of this policy. She can't produce any names of any individuals or organizations, because this has nothing to do with fairness. It has everything to do with this government trying to reward its friends at the expense of Ontario's working families. That's what this policy is all about.

Madam Minister, rather than dance over, around, under and through this policy, why not admit what Ontarians have now come to understand—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Sorry to interrupt the leader of the official opposition. Stop the clock. The member for London-Fanshawe, please come to order. It's like your microphone's on, you have such a loud voice. It's like you're two feet away. I would ask him to come to order, please.

Sorry for the interruption. The leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, your motivation has become painfully transparent, and rather than dance around, over, under and through this issue, why not be honest here today? Come clean and admit that your policy to send public dollars to elite private schools like Upper Canada College has nothing to do with fairness and everything with looking after your friends.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Well, the honourable member really does pass belief here. First of all, if he wants to look for people who support tax credits for independent schools for those hard-working Ontario families, he need go no further than the editorial pages of his favourite newspaper, the Toronto Star. He needs to go no further than the editorial pages and the radio open-line shows across this province, where families are calling in and saying, yes, they do support this.

The other thing that is always interesting is, you know, when you have a caucus, as we do, of individuals who have children and grandchildren and brothers and sisters and husbands and wives who are in the public school system, our commitment to the public system continues. The budget is very clear. Our policies are very clear. We will continue to do what we told Ontario's hard-working families we would do: implement a more rigorous curriculum, bring in standardized testing to make sure our students are learning that curriculum, bring in a comprehensive teacher-testing program to make sure that our teachers are as good as they can be. Those commitments stand, that education—

**The Speaker:** The minister's time is up. New question. The leader of the third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier.

Premier, two years ago, during the election, I was in a leaders' debate with you where you berated Mr McGuinty for suggesting that he would consider public funds, taxpayers' funds, for private schools. In fact I

remember you saying over and over that you would never, never use taxpayers' money, public money, to fund private schools. Now you're intending to use \$3,500 a year to fund students attending private schools.

Premier, will you keep the promise you made during the election campaign? Will you ensure that public funds are not used to provide support to private schools?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I appreciate the question. I think the issue in the leaders' debate dealt with vouchers, which I spoke against and said we were not in favour of vouchers.

You referenced the now leader of the official opposition. What I chastised him for at the same time was saying one thing to Jewish groups—"Yes, I'm not ideologically opposed to that"—whatever the audience, he'd tell them what they wanted to hear. He was for it or against it, depending on whom he was talking to. That is typical, quite frankly, of the Liberal leader.

Let me say to the member: you've been very clear that you are opposed. You are opposed to vouchers, you are opposed to tax credits, you are opposed to choice, you are opposed to families getting any kind of tax break. You are opposed to all these things. I think you're wrong, and I think the voters have proven you are wrong, that they don't share your view. On the other hand, you have at least been consistent and you say the same thing to the same audience. What I pointed out was that the leader of the official opposition says one thing to one audience—

**The Speaker:** Order. The Premier's time is up.

**Mr Hampton:** Speaker, you're going to have to help us out here a bit, because between the Premier's flips and the Liberals' flops, I think a lot of people in Ontario are getting confused. I heard the Premier say very clearly that as long as he was Premier, he would never use taxpayers' money, public money, to provide financial support to private schools. Premier, you've broken your promise. Please give us an explanation for your incredible flip-flop on this, when you were so very clear during that election debate that it would never happen as long as you were Premier of Ontario.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I said I was opposed to vouchers and I'm still opposed to vouchers and I remain opposed to vouchers. What I am in favour of, though, is excellence in education. I'm in favour of choice, and I am in favour of particularly low- and modest-income Ontarians getting a very modest tax credit to encourage and support their choice. These are parents who can't afford the luxury private schools you're talking about. These are parents, many of whom have scrimped and saved to send their children to the school of their choice, in many cases religion-based schools. They do not have the same opportunities the Catholic religion-based schools have in our province. That's why many other provinces have supported, with some varying degree, tax credits, not to schools, not to individual schools—not vouchers—but to parents to help them, particularly low- and middle-income Ontarians, be able to afford that choice. We believe it's fair, we believe it's right—

**The Speaker:** Order. The Premier's time is up.

**Mr Hampton:** The Liberals can call it a voucher; you can call it a tax credit. It amounts to the same thing: you're going to take taxpayers' money, public money, out of a public school system that isn't adequately funded now, and you're going to use it to provide funds for private schools. That much is clear.

Premier, what hurts so badly about this is, there are thousands of children out there in the public system who can't get special-education testing, never mind special-education services. There is classroom after classroom that doesn't have a full set of textbooks. There are schools that are laying off teachers, laying off librarians, laying off music teachers, that can't have a vice-principal or a principal, and you're going to take money and use it for private education. Between your flipping and the Liberal flopping, we have a hard time telling the difference. But what we do know is that kids who need public education are going to suffer. Don't you think you could do more good using that money in the public system and let the well-off do whatever they want? Don't you think that would be a better solution?

1500

**Hon Mr Harris:** The first thing you have to understand is this: not one cent is coming from the public education system to support tax credits for parents who choose to send their children to alternative schools. Secondly, this tax credit is a very modest amount of the additional costs these parents bear.

Many editorials, including the Welland paper, where your member was elected, and the Ottawa Citizen, have pointed out the unfairness. Many have pointed out the inequity, many have pointed out that in a multicultural Ontario the opportunities for many new immigrants to this province and the affordability, particularly for low- and middle-income parents, is not there.

So we made it very clear. This is a very modest step to provide tax credits to those parents, not to schools—

**The Speaker:** Order. The Premier's time is up.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** To the Premier also: last Friday you announced a new \$120-million-a-year charge on municipal hydroelectric utilities that will take effect on October 1. You announced this new \$120-million-a-year charge, and you said it will be used to pay down Hydro's debt. But last year your Minister of Energy said that charges to pay down the debt were already included in people's hydro bills.

Premier, will you guarantee that this new \$120-million-a-year charge will not result in people's electricity bills going up? Will you give that guarantee?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think the Minister of Energy can respond.

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** As I have explained to the honourable member on several occasions in the House, yes, for years now a portion of people's electricity bills has been used to pay off Hydro debt. However, we've spent \$2 billion

on environmental improvements at Ontario Hydro over the last seven years to help improve the air quality. It's a top priority with this government and a top priority with Ontario Power Generation. That was \$2 billion less that could go toward the debt.

The auditor pointed out in a special report this January that we were off on our debt payments by \$647 million. Therefore, yes, the money we've announced will go toward paying off the debt.

Unlike any actions you took or that the Liberals took in office, we're responsible and we believe we should start paying down the \$38 billion worth of debt that's been left to us.

**Mr Hampton:** And would the minister guarantee that this new charge would not drive up people's hydro-electricity bills even more, and I take it from the answer that it will.

Minister, earlier this spring you announced an 8% increase. So this \$120-million charge is on top of the 8% you already announced. A year ago you were here and said your sell-off of hydroelectricity in Ontario would result in lower prices, but now the bills keep going up and up and up.

Will you guarantee this will be the last increase that people will see in their hydro bills as a result of your dirty deal to sell off our hydroelectricity system?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** There are a couple of important facts I'd like to point out. First of all, there is no automatic increase, and even if the entire tax was passed on to customers it would be about \$2 a month.

It's up to Floyd Laughren and the Ontario Energy Board and every municipality. Every municipal utility will have to apply to the Ontario Energy Board. Mr Laughren may very well say to them, "You can surely find \$2 a month in savings." He may very well say that, and the energy board has the authority to do that.

This government is looking for efficiencies. When I came into the office of energy minister, there were 303 municipal electrical utilities. Today there are 91 municipal electrical utilities. We know from those utilities that there are tremendous savings to be found.

Finally, unlike the NDP, who stole Hydro money away from the company—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Minister, you can't use that language. You'll have to withdraw it. Please withdraw it.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

Unlike the NDP who failed to pay off any of Ontario Hydro's debt, unlike the Liberals who used Hydro money to spend on all kinds of other programs and didn't pay off any debt—

**The Speaker:** The minister's time is up. New question.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** I have a question for the Minister of Education. There was a time in this province when the Minister of Education was

the minister for public education. Minister, you will be remembered, however, as the minister of private education because you've ushered in a new tier of privileged learning, paid for with public funds for the first time ever.

First you and your predecessors attacked public education. Some reasonable people thought it was just incompetence that you couldn't get schools to work properly, but now it is very clear. Your new arrangement will give families, not only the ones who have kids in elite private schools now but those who send them there in the future, \$3,500. Today, you pay \$6,800 for each child in the system. Will you agree that you will save \$3,300 for every child you scare out of public education into your new publicly funded private schools?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** We are spending \$13.8 billion on the public education system because we think it is very important to make that investment in the public education system. We increased money to public education last year. We increased it again this year, over \$360 million above and beyond enrolment, because we know that is an important investment to make into our public education system.

The honourable member obviously hasn't talked to some of his caucus colleagues who actually support the move to respect parental choice. Michael Bryant said, "I have to support this." Monte Kwinter said he supported this. There are other members in your party who support respecting parental choice. We've strengthened parental choice in the public system. We've given them more say. We're giving them more choice. We respect parental choice in independent schools as well.

**Mr Kennedy:** Minister of Private Education, you should stop hiding behind it. You should admit it. You should be there saying you're proud of a track record that has attacked people in public education, that has caused teacher shortages, that you would impose teacher tests, all manner of impositions on public schools, but you stand there prepared to give public money to elite private schools that have to meet no conditions whatsoever.

You've had six years to create customers for private schools. That's what you've been doing. You've reduced public school funding by \$918 per student out there and you've given none of that money back. You didn't even give enough money this year for inflation and enrolment. It's been your plan, the plan of your government, to create the conditions where kids in public education will be sent into private education, and now you've decided to pay for it. Will you agree today to withdraw your plan, to stop doing this ill-advised promotion of private schools over our ability to provide public education excellence for all?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Again, the honourable member is wrong. There was \$12.9 billion for public education in 1995; today there's going to be \$13.8 billion. That is an increase above and beyond enrolment, investments that we think are important.

I know the Liberal Party is opposed to standardized tests. I know the Liberal Party is opposed to teacher testing. I know the Liberal Party is opposed to every improvement in the public system we have put forward. But you know what? You might want to go to your union friends, the ones who caused the turmoil, the people who've taken away extracurricular activities, the people who have done things to our students, to our hard-working teachers.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order.**

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** You might want to go to them and say that is the biggest threat to public education—

**The Speaker:** Minister, take her seat.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Windsor West, come to order, please. Sorry, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** One of the biggest threats to public education today is those individuals who think that politics is acceptable—

**The Speaker:** Answer?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** —in the classroom. We do not agree. We have put forward more money and improvements in the public education system, and that commitment does not—

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up.

#### SEAT BELTS AND CHILDREN'S CAR SEATS

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Transportation. On Saturday, April 28, a tragedy occurred that shook the residents of my community. We were very saddened to learn that a 12-year-old Scarborough boy lost his life when his father's car spun out of control. He was not wearing his seat belt, but his parents, brother and sister were and they sustained only minor injuries.

Minister, we know the fact is irrefutable: seat belts save lives. Could you please tell us in this House today what your ministry is doing to encourage drivers and passengers to wear their seat belts?

**1510**

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** I thank my colleague from Scarborough Centre for the question. Any loss of life or injury through the non-use of seat belts is indeed a tragedy, a tragedy that can be avoided.

This government recognizes the importance of promoting seat belt use, and that's why on April 14 I launched Ontario's spring seat belt campaign in conjunction with police services and insurance industry representatives right across the province. The campaign was a two-week educational and enforcement campaign that focused on increasing public awareness regarding seat belt usage. It included targeted police activities that complemented year-round enforcement efforts. This is a part of our government's commitment to build on our excellent safety record.

It cannot be said enough that seat belts save lives. That's why initiatives such as our spring seat belt campaign go a long way to raise public awareness, improve the protection of drivers and passengers, and ultimately save lives.

**Ms Mushinski:** Thank you for that response, Minister. Community safety is very important to both myself and of course the residents of my riding of Scarborough Centre. Could you please inform this House about other ways that we can ensure that a tragedy like the one I expressed does not occur again?

**Hon Mr Clark:** I'd like to tell the House that another key component in this year's campaign was the Love Me—Buckle Me Right Day. That took part on April 21 at a child car safety inspection clinic in Stoney Creek. The inspection clinic was organized by the dedicated people of the Trauma Prevention Council as well as the Hamilton Police Services and the OPP. More than 85 child seat inspection clinics across Ontario were held on Love Me—Buckle Me Right Day to educate parents, caregivers about the proper use of child safety seats. Ontario's seat belt wearing rate is 91%, making it the second highest in the country; however, there is still more for us to do, and the Ministry of Transportation will continue to strive to make our seat belt wearing 100%.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** My question is to the Minister of Education, and it concerns her government's new educational tax credit for private schools.

Minister, I want to know in the clearest language that you can offer what specific standards, what specific criteria you and the Ontario Ministry of Education will demand from these private elementary and secondary schools before students attending those private schools can qualify for the Ontario government's new educational tax credit.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** As the honourable member knows, there are currently rules around if they want to offer the Ontario diploma, they must meet our curriculum standards. Many of them already do use some of our testing and some of our procedures. If there are policy changes that need to be made around this particular implementation of the tax credit, in the consultations that we are doing we will certainly take a look at whether or not those steps are needed.

I think what is also important to note here is that we do respect parental choice; we do respect giving taxpayers back their money to do with it as they see fit for their families. We do support giving parents more say and a voice in their children's education in the public system, and we do respect parents who might wish to make another choice, for example, a religious school. We respect that parental choice as well.

**Mr Conway:** Let me be very clear in putting this question. Minister, we demand of our public schools that

those public schools, for the public grants they receive, must accept and implement the provincial curriculum. They must hire provincially certified teachers. They must accept provincial inspection of their schools. They must accept rigorous and routine testing of their students.

Will you stand in your place today and tell the people of Ontario that you will accept nothing less than those standards of those private elementary and secondary schools before they receive one cent of tax money under this new educational tax credit program of yours?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member, who I know knows his history, who I know knows a lot about education in this country, makes it sound like no other government has ever provided money for independent schools, which is just simply not the case. Not only Quebec, not only Manitoba, not only Saskatchewan, not only British Columbia, not only Alberta—many provinces have already gone down the road, years ago in many cases, to provide funding for independent schools in their province. This is no different. We are doing it by way of a tax credit, we're respecting parental choice, and we are continuing to fund the public education system far beyond enrolment because we believe it is a very important support for our economic prosperity.

I agree with the honourable member that we do demand accountability. Even one of the heads of the teachers' union this week was acknowledging the accountability we have in the public education system, because we want it to be as good as it can be, because we want it to do the job that our students need to have done for them in order to succeed.

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** My question today is for my honourable colleague the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

During the course of the past week, I have heard back from some of my constituents in Parry Sound-Muskoka who have been listening to the media reports of the recently announced budget. On Thursday, May 10, CBC Radio in Sudbury reported that the members of Nickel Belt and Sudbury, Shelley Martel and Rick Bartolucci, were shocked by the Mike Harris government's alleged lack of commitment to the north.

Minister, could you tell my constituents and all members of this House today some of the major initiatives you are undertaking for northerners?

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** I would like to thank the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka for the question.

Let me assure you that the Mike Harris team recognizes that northern Ontario is a key part of the province's economy and we are strongly committed to the north. That's why in the budget we doubled the northern Ontario heritage fund to \$300 million over five years. In February, we relaunched the northern Ontario heritage fund. We revamped the program to focus on five key priority areas for economic growth in the north:

infrastructure, telecommunications, tourism, community foundations and strategic partnerships. As well as that, we've already announced our first four flagship programs in support of northern health care, expanded cellular phone service, agriculture and trails.

The rejuvenated and expanded investment in the heritage fund is one of the major northern-focused initiatives taken by this government.

**Mr Miller:** Minister, thanks for your response. I'm sure my constituents in Parry Sound-Muskoka will be appreciate it. However, my constituents have also brought to my attention that in the same media report from CBC Sudbury, the members for Sudbury and Nickel Belt claimed that the Mike Harris government took millions of dollars in Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp funding from northerners. I find these allegations startling, given that I recall when the NDP took \$60 million from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp just before the 1995 election to make their books look better, and also that the Liberals allocated only \$30 million a year toward the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp.

Minister, could you clarify for all the members of the House today what will happen to the money not spent last year by the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp?

**Hon Mr Newman:** I would like to thank the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka for the opportunity to clarify for members of the House the question of NOHFC funds that were underspent.

As I indicated in my previous response, the heritage fund was revamped to reflect the needs of northerners. There was a time when applications were not being processed because we were revamping the fund to reflect the new priority areas. We are encouraging all eligible applicants to apply to the NOHFC.

Let me assure you that the money that was not spent last year will remain in the fund and will be allocated for projects in northern Ontario. Let me be clear that not one dime of the money allocated in the budget for the NOHFC will go toward anything other than projects in northern Ontario.

1520

#### HÔPITAL MONTFORT MONTFORT HOSPITAL

**M. Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River) :** Ma question s'adresse au premier ministre. L'hôpital Montfort d'Ottawa, le seul hôpital universitaire de langue française dans la province, est en cour d'appel de l'Ontario toute cette semaine à cause de votre gouvernement. Un tribunal ontarien avait reconnu que l'hôpital Montfort jouissait d'une protection constitutionnelle comme celle que la Charte des droits accorde dans le domaine scolaire aux minorités linguistiques partout au pays.

Monsieur le premier ministre, l'hôpital Montfort est une institution vitale pour la francophonie ontarienne.

Allez-vous vous désister de cette cause et allez-vous permettre aux francophones de cette province de conserver le seul hôpital à offrir des services complets en français ?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** The Attorney General will answer this one.

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** The member opposite prefaced his question this afternoon by acknowledging that in fact there is a case that is currently being argued in front of the Court of Appeal. It is a case of some importance, but as is the situation with any case that is in front of the courts, we are not in a position to comment on it.

I will say this to you, though, Mr Speaker: the decision of the Divisional Court was a decision that raised a number of important constitutional issues. It imposed what might be seen as a number of new and extended constitutional obligations. It is for that reason that it was the decision of this government to go forward and ask for the assistance of the Court of Appeal, which we will have shortly, after the case has been argued.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Supplementary?

**M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James) :** Monsieur le procureur, écoutez, c'est bien simple. Vous autres, vous ne voulez pas faire des commentaires faisant affaire avec la cour, mais vous êtes très préparés à faire des commentaires quand ça vient à délaisser les francophones de l'Ontario.

On vous demande la question encore. Vous avez une chance de dire aux francophones de la province, « Oui, on croit que les francophones doivent avoir des services en français, tels que l'hôpital Montfort. »

Je vous demande, êtes-vous préparé à vous désister de la cour d'appel que vous êtes allé en avant avec ?

**Hon Mr Young:** As I indicated a moment ago, we are not at this juncture permitted to discuss what is going on in front of the Court of Appeal. It couldn't be any clearer. I think even in the supplementary question the member opposite acknowledged that there are restrictions as to what can be said in this assembly on this day dealing with that issue.

But we have said as a government on numerous occasions that we remain committed to the provision of French-language services across this province, and we will continue to provide those services as required, wherever and whenever they are required.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** In the absence of the Minister of Education, I want to ask a follow-up question to the Premier about this educational tax credit for private schools.

Mr Premier, my question is essentially the one I asked moment ago. Let me make it very clear. Are you prepared to stand in your place today as the leader of the government of Ontario and tell me, this Legislature and the province beyond that any private kindergarten, elementary or secondary school, in order to be approved

for the educational tax credit, must hire certified teachers?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Those will be details to be worked out by the Minister of Education. Before any tax credit is made available, those will be detailed. We'll be wanting to consult with you and get your opinion. We'll be wanting to consult with those parents whom the program is aimed at, and of course with those schools.

What of course we are most concerned about is that we have excellence in our education system. That excellence comes from qualified, good teachers. That excellence comes from a curriculum that challenges our students. That excellence comes from choice. Those are the areas we're trying to address.

I am sure the member, who has long been a champion of separate school funding, for that choice for Catholic parents, will want to assist both me and the minister and the government in implementing this fair policy.

**Mr Conway:** Your government talks a great deal about accountability for public funds. This is not a detail, Premier; this is a core issue for the taxpayers and the students of Ontario.

Let me put the core question to you again. We insist that public schools, for the public monies they receive, accept public governance, certified teachers. They must implement the provincial curriculum and they must be inspected.

Are you prepared to say today that before any private kindergarten, elementary or secondary school receives any of this tax credit money, they must accept the same standards and the same criteria that the Ontario government imposes and demands of the public school system?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I appreciate that some in the Liberal caucus seem to be now for this policy and wish to provide assistance in making sure it's applied fairly and appropriately.

I know the international standards are used in some of the public schools; for example, Harrison Public School, which works within the parameters of the international curriculum, yet also meets the criteria of our curriculum and our standards and of course is funded. I'm assuming you are in favour of that as well.

So I welcome the member's input and advice, as I'm sure the minister does, as we work to implement a policy not only of fairness but a policy of choice contributing to excellence in education, and most importantly a policy of benefit to the low- and middle-income hard-working families in this province.

## PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS' SURVIVOR SCHOLARSHIP FUND

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** My question is for the Solicitor General. We have heard a lot today about Police Week and the wonderful work of police officers. Public safety officers of all types go to work every day to protect us and to keep our communities safe. Sadly, sometimes they don't come back.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. Minister of Labour, your own member is asking a question and I can't hear him. You're shouting across.

Sorry for the interruption.

**Mr Gill:** Minister, can you tell us what our government is doing to help the families of fallen public safety officers?

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** It's a very important question.

On July 24, 1997, our government launched the public safety officers' survivor scholarship fund. The fund provides grants for tuition and books for any course of study leading to an undergraduate degree or diploma at any accredited Canadian university or college. To be eligible, the applicant must be the child or surviving spouse of a public safety officer who was killed in the line of duty. Public safety officers, for the purpose of the scholarship fund, include all municipal, provincial or First Nations police officers as defined in the Police Services Act; all firefighters, including both professionals and volunteers; all correctional officers, probation and parole officers; and youth workers, whether employed by the government of Ontario or by an organization contracted to deliver such services.

**Mr Gill:** Minister, this program is just one way of paying tribute to those individuals who die keeping the rest of us safe. How many family members have received grants through the public safety officers' survivor scholarship?

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** To date, 16 scholarship applicants have been received, with approximately \$113,000 in scholarship funding. Of the 16 recipients, three were children of fallen firefighters, 12 were children of fallen police officers, and one was the spouse of a fallen police officer.

The scholarship recipients have attended a variety of educational programs, including engineering, business administration, psychology, kinesiology, registered massage therapy, early childhood education and the correctional worker program. The government is exceedingly proud to offer this financial assistance to further the education of the family members of fallen public safety officers. We want these family members to know how much we value and appreciate the ultimate sacrifice they made.

1530

#### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Premier and it has to do with the motion that we will vote on today at about 6 o'clock calling for a public inquiry into the shooting death of Dudley George.

There's an overwhelming amount of evidence, Premier, that suggests that what you said went on is contradicted by evidence elsewhere.

The latest contradiction was on December 20 here in the Legislature. You told the House you met with the OPP commissioner on September 6, the day of the shooting. In fact, you said, "... I indicated quite freely five years ago...." In other words, around the shooting death you said publicly that you met with the OPP commissioner. I sent you two letters asking you to show the proof of that. No response.

Amazingly, on May 2, you completely changed your story. You said you didn't meet with the commissioner that day, which was astonishing. You said you met with other senior OPP officers. You said you met with Commissioner O'Grady about Ipperwash on a day after September 6. Commissioner O'Grady says he never met with you to discuss Ipperwash.

Will you finally do the right thing and approve the calling of a public inquiry in the shooting death at Ipperwash?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** The Attorney General can respond.

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** As the member opposite knows, there are still outstanding civil matters before the courts. He is well aware of the fact that the issues that are being dealt with and that are being considered in that civil action are the very same issues that would be addressed in any public inquiry.

We as a government have said repeatedly, the Premier said last week and I have said on numerous occasions that we will only consider other options once the issues that are in front of the court at this time are dealt with.

**Mr Phillips:** That is unacceptable to the people of Ontario. That would be like saying that the only way to get at the truth at Walkerton would be to ask the family of a victim, someone who died there, to fund the public inquiry.

The Premier has already spent almost \$500,000 of taxpayers' money and there's another \$500,000 spent by other cabinet ministers, \$1 million in this civil case fighting the George family. I will say to everyone in the province of Ontario that the George family is a family of extremely modest means, fighting this case against the government.

There is only one answer and that is a public inquiry where we will get at the truth, not a civil case funded by the George family. Furthermore, the civil case will not get at some of the essential issues, the policy issues, what can be done to stop this from happening again. That will not be discussed in the civil case.

I say to you again, Premier, will you finally do the right thing, the decent thing for the people of Ontario, and agree to a public inquiry and stop putting the George family through this terrible tragedy?

**Hon Mr Young:** As the member opposite is undoubtedly aware, it was the George family who initiated the civil action that is currently in front of the courts. It was the George family who laid out the issues—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Phillips:** Because you wouldn't call a public inquiry. That's the only reason.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. Stop the clock. The member for Scarborough-Agincourt, please come to order.

The Attorney General.

**Hon Mr Young:** As I indicated a moment ago, it was in fact the George family who made a decision to initiate a civil action and did so. They laid out the issues they wished to have the court examine, and those are the very issues that are being examined at this time.

In an effort to ensure that the examination is comprehensive, in an effort to ensure it is done in an expeditious fashion, we, the province, asked the court to appoint a case manager. A judge has been appointed to ensure there is complete disclosure on all sides. I have confidence in the judiciary, and as this matter is presently before the courts, it is indeed inappropriate to engage in a lengthy discussion in this assembly.

#### GOVERNMENT USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean):** My question is for the Chair of Management Board of Cabinet. Our government has spoken a great deal about the measures it is taking to bring the government into the 21st century and to meet the changing needs and expectations of the people of this province. In the Ottawa area, we believe this should involve government embracing technology and the benefits it brings to the workplace. Technology allows government employees to do their work in a more efficient manner and ultimately helps provide the taxpayers with greater value for their money.

Minister, could you bring this House up to date on what this government is doing to ensure that technological resources are used in a prudent and effective manner to meet the needs of Ontarians in the 21st?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** It's clear that the member from Ottawa West-Nepean has the interests of his area at heart, especially when he talks about high-tech. But this government is committed to achieving the best possible value for the tax dollar for the people of Ontario.

**?Interjection:** That's old news.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I guess that's not new news here, but I think it's well worth repeating from time to time that this government is in favour of giving the best value for the tax dollar to the people of Ontario.

Making use of technology involves much more than computers, fax machines and e-mail in our offices. It involves projects such as those in the Ministry of Natural Resources, where they have an on-line campsite reservation system, or the government of Ontario service kiosks, where you can renew driver's licence, among other services. Of course, each ministry has its own Web site where people can access a wealth of information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

But this is not all there is. We want to have several more internal initiatives where we can allocate resources properly—we'll continue this discussion, I see, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Supplementary.

**Mr Guzzo:** Mr Minister, I'm sure you're aware that the increased reliance on technology brings with it challenges to ensure that information is secure and protected. All of us are interested in seeing that we use these tools to facilitate a flexible and dynamic civil service that delivers efficient services. But we also want these tools used where we can be assured that the integrity and security of the system is maintained.

Minister, I'd like you to tell the House what our government is doing to ensure that integrity and security concerns are being met.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** Certainly the security and integrity of our infrastructure is very important to us. It's a question I asked our government officials. It's important for us, as we deliver more and more services to the public, to assure them it's being done in a very secure way.

Ontario is a world leader in this field. We have arrived there because of our coordinated approach to ensuring we address these issues. The measures we've taken include implementing iSERV, a central unit responsible for both policy and operations to ensure the security of the government's information technology infrastructure; implementing an information protection centre to proactively ensure the technical infrastructure is safe from corruption.

These types of improvements and these types of investments in security will continue. It's very important, as we move to the forefront of e-government, to ensure the people of Ontario that measures to protect the security and integrity of our infrastructure in I and IT areas are certainly there.

#### WALKERTON TRAGEDY

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** A question for the Premier. May 20 is the first anniversary of the Walkerton tainted water tragedy. This morning, I was astounded to hear the environment minister say that neither she nor you are planning to attend the commemorative events planned in Walkerton this Sunday to mark the first anniversary of that tragic event. She also indicated you have no specific plans to mark that day. Can you tell me if this is true?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think the minister can respond.

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** In response to the question, it's important to remember that Walkerton was a very sad and unfortunate event, and particularly this week the thoughts of all those in this Legislature will be with the families and friends of those who have lost family members and who have suffered as a result of that tragedy. I understand various community groups have organized events to mark the anniversary. Again, we certainly support those groups

that have planned events in order to ensure it is a time of remembrance for people in that particular community.

What our government has done is taken a leadership role. We are moving forward and we have introduced Operation Clean Water—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I'm afraid the minister's time is up. Supplementary.

**Ms Churley:** The Premier is gone, and the supplementary was to him.

When it comes to Walkerton, water and the environment, neglect seems to be your trademark, Minister. I am shocked that you're not going to be there on Sunday. But let me make a suggestion to you.

Over five months ago, your Premier promised here in this House to our leader to provide funding for a comprehensive health study of the Walkerton community, and that you would involve the community, the citizens, in the design of that study. You have done neither to date, five months later. May I suggest, Minister, that you go to Walkerton on Sunday with the cheque in hand for that health study and the plan in hand for consultation with the community. That would be one positive way to help that community heal and commemorate that day.

1540

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I would refer the health study question to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I can assure this House that the government places the highest priority on ensuring that Ontarians have access to safe drinking water. As the honourable member may know, on December 12 last year the Premier committed to undertake a health study in Walkerton. We are living up to that promise. I can tell the honourable member that we have been working with the Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound board of health in developing the terms of reference for the health study. I can assure this House that our commitment remains absolutely clear. We've heard the concerns raised by members of the Walkerton community about possible long-term health indications for those who are affected by the E coli outbreak. We are taking action through this very comprehensive study that will be completed in a timely manner. Once we finalize the terms of reference with public input from the local area, we will move ahead.

## PETITIONS

### ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** We're launching a very important petition campaign related to cost-of-living adjustment needs for those who are living on Ontario disability support. The petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the recipients of benefits under the Ontario Disability Act have not received a cost-of-living increase since a \$2.50 increase in 1987; and

"Whereas the cost of living in Ontario has increased in every one of the years since, especially for basic needs such as housing, food, utilities, transportation, clothing and household goods; and

"Whereas disabled Ontarians are recognized under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, and as such have the right to have their basic needs met, including adequate housing, a proper and healthy diet, a bed that does not make them sicker and clothing that fits and is free of stains and holes; and

"Whereas their basic needs are no longer being met because the Ministry of Social Services has not increased the shelter and basic needs allowance of disabled Ontarians eligible to receive benefits under the Ontario disability support program to reflect the increased costs of shelter and basic needs (and in fact have reduced these benefits for those recipients who receive a disability benefit under the Canada pension plan); and

"Whereas a new Ontarians with Disabilities Act has yet to be introduced to help protect the thousands of vulnerable people in Ontario who are dependent on others for their basic needs and care and who are eligible for benefits under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, request the Ontario Legislature to urge the government to respect their own definition of basic needs and provide a cost-of-living increase to recipients of benefits through the Ontario Disability Support Program Act that is sufficient to cover the increased costs of their basic needs as of 2001 prices, and that this benefit not be reduced as a result of increases in the Canada pension plan benefit."

This was sent to me by Roslyn Bergman, with the Canadian Mental Health Association in Thunder Bay, who is helping lead this campaign. I have hundreds of signatures here. There will be many, many more to come. I'm proud to sign it.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** Workers, their families and their unions continue to be concerned about exposure to carcinogens in the workplace. To that end, I continue to receive petitions from the CAW, forwarded to me by Cathy Walker, their national director of health and safety. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this year 130,000 Canadians will contract cancer and there are at minimum 17 funerals every day for Canadian workers who died from cancer caused by workplace exposure to cancer-causing substances known as carcinogens; and

"Whereas the World Health Organization estimates that 80% of all cancers have environmental causes and the International Labour Organization estimates that one

million workers globally have cancer because of exposure at work to carcinogens; and

"Whereas most cancers can be beaten if government had the political will to make industry replace toxic substances with non-toxic substances; and

"Whereas very few health organizations study the link between occupations and cancer, even though more study of this link is an important step to defeating this dreadful disease;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That it become a legal requirement that occupational history be recorded on a standard form when a patient presents at a physician for diagnosis or treatment of cancer; and

"That the diagnosis and occupational history be forwarded to a central cancer registry for analysis as to the link between cancer and occupation."

On behalf of my NDP colleagues, I add my name to this petition.

#### ELECTRICITY GENERATING STATION

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I have not had the privilege of presenting a petition in this House for three and a half years, and I'm very proud, now that I'm no longer a cabinet minister, I'm allowed to do this, and I'm also allowed to do it on behalf of the Speaker who, my honourable friend knows, is not able to present petitions. So it is with pride that I present this petition on behalf of the Speaker and myself; it's from both of our residents on probably the most important issue that I've had to deal with in my riding.

It's a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas Sithe Energies Canadian Development Ltd is actively pursuing the development of an 800 MW electricity generating facility;

"Whereas the 14-hectare parcel of land on which the station is proposed is located on the east side of Winston Churchill Boulevard in the Southdown industrial district of Mississauga;

"Whereas Sithe has stated its commitment to an open dialogue with communities where it has a presence and to being responsive to the concerns of the same; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has a responsibility to ensure the safety of Ontario citizens and to determine how this facility will impact those who live in its immediate, surrounding area,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario direct the Ministry of the Environment"—and I'm happy to note that the Minister of the Environment is in the House at this time—"to undertake a formal environmental assessment of the Sithe project."

I'm very happy to add my name to this petition.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** My petition reads as follows; this is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we believe that universally accessible, publicly funded health care is sacred and must be protected;

"Whereas Mike Harris intends on turning his back on working families and transforming our system into an American-style, two-tier system, where only the rich will get quality health care;

"Whereas we believe that Mike Harris had a secret agenda to promote two-tier health care in Ontario and now the secret is out,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"Do not turn your back on Ontario's working families. Fight Mike Harris's agenda to destroy medicare and fight his plan to create a two-tier health care system."

I affix my signature, as I'm in complete agreement with this petition.

#### SAFE DRINKING WATER LEGISLATION

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** I have a petition which reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the people of Ontario have the right to receive clean and safe drinking water; and

"Whereas clean, safe drinking water is a basic human entitlement and essential for the protection of public health; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario have the right to receive accurate and immediate information about the quality of water; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and the government of Ontario have failed to protect the quality of drinking water in Ontario; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and the government of Ontario have failed to provide the necessary financial resources to the Ministry of the Environment; and

"Whereas the policies of Mike Harris and the government of Ontario have endangered the environment and the health of the citizens of Ontario,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) Immediately restore adequate funding and staffing to the Ministry of the Environment;

"(2) Immediately pass into law ... the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2000."

I affix my signature to this petition, as I support it.

#### DIABETES TREATMENT

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas over 500,000 people in Ontario have diabetes; and

"Whereas to the expense of treating diabetes, many people cannot afford the ongoing expense of treating diabetes and if left untreated or improperly managed, diabetes can lead to blindness, vascular disease, kidney disease, neuropathy and other problems; and

"Whereas today, more than ever before, people with diabetes can expect to live active, independent, and vital lives if they make a lifelong commitment to careful management of the disease; and

"Whereas by providing the resources to successfully manage this disease, the government can ensure more efficient health care for people with diabetes at a reduced cost to the health care system,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all diabetic supplies as prescribed by an endocrinologist be covered under the Ontario health insurance plan."

I am pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

1550

#### WATER EXTRACTION

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the residents and cottagers of Bob's Lake, strenuously object to the permit issued by the Ministry of the Environment to OMYA Inc to remove 1.5 million litres of water per day from the Tay River without adequate assessment of the consequences and without adequate consultation with the public and those people and groups who have expertise and interest; and

"Whereas it is our belief that this water-taking will drastically impact the environment and seriously affect the water levels in Bob's Lake and Christie Lake;

"Whereas Bob's Lake and the Tay River watersheds are already highly stressed by the historic responsibility of Parks Canada to use Bob's Lake as a reservoir for the Rideau Canal; and

"Whereas the movement of water from the lake through the watershed for navigation purposes in the canal provides sufficient stress and problems for the lake, and this water-taking permit will only compound the stresses on the waterway;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We request that this permit be rescinded until a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of water-taking by OMYA Inc on the environment, the water levels and the water needs of these communities is complete. An independent non-partisan body should undertake this evaluation."

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 336 people.

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this government is planning a complete overhaul of the developmental services system, which could result in the closure of the three remaining developmentally handicapped regional centres;

"Whereas suitable quality medical, behavioural, social, emotional and spiritual services are readily available in the three remaining centres; and

"Whereas there is a distinct deficiency of services available in the private sector, including dentists, kinesiologists, psychiatrists, physicians, and emergency services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ask that you recognize that the three remaining centres for developmentally handicapped individuals are providing a community for the residents that live there, and acknowledge that these centres deliver quality care and services by keeping them open and by directing private/public agencies with limited resources and services to access the resources at the centres and to work in partnership with them."

It's signed by a number of residents from Cedar Springs, Blenheim and Chatham. I have signed this petition.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

In agreement, I affix my signature. Thank you.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** I have a further petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and signed by a number of good residents from my riding of York West.

"Whereas we believe that universally accessible, publicly funded health care is sacred and must be protected;

"Whereas Mike Harris intends on turning his back on working families and transforming our system into an American-style, two-tier system where only the rich will get quality health care;

"Whereas we believe that Mike Harris had a secret agenda to promote two-tier health care in Ontario and now the secret is out;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Do not turn your back on Ontario's working families. Fight Mike Harris's agenda to destroy medicare and fight his plan to create a two-tier health care system."

I will add my signature to it.

#### PROTECTION DES MINEURS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 134 people.

« Étant donné que des enfants sont exposés à des biens et services sexuellement explicites dans un grand nombre d'établissements commerciaux ;

« Étant donné qu'un grand nombre de municipalités n'ont aucun arrêté municipal visant à protéger les mineurs contre les biens et services sexuellement explicites, et que, pour les municipalités ayant de tels arrêtés municipaux, on n'y trouve aucune uniformité, et que ces municipalités n'ont pas réussi à protéger les mineurs contre les biens et services sexuellement explicites ;

« Étant donné que l'Ontario devrait avoir une seule loi au niveau provincial visant à protéger les mineurs contre les biens et services sexuellement explicites,

« Nous, les soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario d'adopter le projet de loi 95 visant à protéger les mineurs contre les biens et services sexuellement explicites dans le plus bref délai. »

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The time for petitions has ended and it's time to wish Tom Morphy a happy birthday. He and his wife are celebrating their 52nd wedding anniversary later this summer.

#### OPPOSITION DAY

#### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I move that this House recognizes that there are serious concerns about the events surrounding the shooting death of a First Nations man, Dudley George, at Ipperwash Provincial Park in September 1995.

That the House requires that the government take the following action to ensure the public knows the truth of these events:

The Premier is to recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that a commission be appointed to inquire into and report on the death of Dudley George, and to make recommendations directed to the avoidance of violence in similar circumstances;

The commission is to be given powers under the Public Inquiries Act. Premier of Ontario.

I believe each of the parties has roughly 36 minutes in which to provide their remarks.

I want to say to the public that there's an overwhelming amount of evidence of the need for a public inquiry. This isn't just rumours and innuendo; there is documentation on the need for an inquiry.

Just a little bit of background on the situation here. This was a piece of land that was First Nations land purchased by the province of Ontario in roughly 1937 for the purposes of making a park called Ipperwash Provincial Park. During the construction of that park, the government's own engineer, the one who was doing the construction, found a First Nations burial ground and said to the First Nations there, "You should, through the federal government, request the province to properly preserve this. Fence it off."

It was the government that recommended that to the First Nations, which they did. The local council passed a resolution, it went through the normal channels of the federal government and back to provincial government. That's in the records here at Queen's Park.

#### 1600

Nothing was done about that. For many years, the First Nations in the area expressed concern about it and let it be known they planned to occupy the park. This was not a surprise. As a matter of fact, the OPP were aware that this was going to happen and actually had undercover people camping there through August. They knew the occupation was going to occur and they had a plan laid out for how to deal with it. As a matter of fact, the police met on the Friday before the occupation. They went over the situation with the staff there and said, "Here's what's going to happen on Labour Day." Sure enough, on Labour Day, 30 to 40 First Nations took over the park at the close of the day when people had left.

Everything was going as the police anticipated and as the First Nations anticipated. And then something terribly wrong happened. Two days later, on the Wednesday, there was a confrontation between the OPP and the First

Nations. For the first time in at least a century, a First Nations person was killed in a dispute with the police around a land claim. Unfortunately, an OPP officer was convicted of criminal negligence causing death and the park is still closed.

We have a tragic situation that happened here. The need for a public inquiry is clear. I would say that many people have been calling for it. The local council of the township of Bosanquet, the township this occurred in, passed a public resolution saying, "Have a public inquiry." Lambton county council, the county council that this occurred in, also passed a resolution saying, "We need a public inquiry."

As I say, the park is still closed. This situation will not heal until there is one. Why do we need a public inquiry? There are so many contradictions in what the government said and what subsequently happened.

I'll start with the burial ground. I can remember asking a question and saying, "The reason the First Nations went in there was because there was a burial ground." The then Attorney General said, "That isn't why they went in there." Well, the government finally had to admit that in its own files it had records of the burial ground. I think there were 43 charges of trespass laid against the First Nations. Every one of those was dropped because the crown said, "Because we have evidence of a burial ground, we are dropping all charges against the First Nations. We've been told by judges that we could not get a conviction because they had something called a colour of right defence."

That's the first thing. The First Nations said "burial ground," and the government ignored that and said there's no evidence of it. They said that before they went in there. They said that in the days before the shooting, and then the government was forced to admit it had in its own files right here at Queen's Park evidence of it.

The Premier has said he left this entirely up to the OPP, hands off. But then we know that on December 20 here in the Legislature the Premier said to us, "Yes, I met with the OPP commissioner that day. As a matter of fact, I admitted that freely. I told the public that I met with the OPP commissioner the day of the shooting." I sent two letters to the Premier saying, "This comes as quite a revelation to us, that you admitted freely around the shooting time that you'd been meeting with the OPP commissioner. Please send me evidence of that."

Well, I never got a response to those letters and now I'm told the story is, "We did not receive the letters." That is too incredible to believe. A trusted member of my staff typed them. I signed them and a trusted member of the staff put them in the mail here at Queen's Park. And now the Premier's office is saying, "We didn't get those letters."

Does that not seem strange? He said he met with the OPP commissioner, and then just a few days ago in the Legislature he said, "I was mistaken. I didn't meet with the OPP commissioner that day." Can anyone imagine being mistaken about that? The shooting death was an enormous issue around the province. It had to be the

number one issue facing the Premier day after day after day. There was a huge concern across the province after the shooting death, concerns about the implications of it. It was an international event, and the Premier says, "I said I met with the commissioner." Then he said he didn't meet with the commissioner. Then he said he'd met with the commissioner a few days after, and Commissioner O'Grady said, "I never met with the Premier on it." That's the second thing.

The third thing is, the Premier has said, "We left all this to the OPP. The handling of this whole event was left to the OPP." Well, there is strong evidence that what the Ontario Provincial Police wanted to do was something quite different than what happened. I quote from some logs of discussion between senior OPP officers when they heard of the type of injunction the government was going for: "Well, that injunction surprises me ... they went from that ... regular type of injunction to the emergency type which you know isn't really in our favour ... we want a little bit more time."

So the government says the OPP simply were doing it on their own—"We simply let them handle it"—and then strong evidence that the way they wanted to handle it, the type of injunction they were seeking, the approach they wanted to take changed very dramatically.

I mentioned the fact that they're now denying they got the two letters I sent to the Premier. There was a senior OPP officer working in the Solicitor General's office, a well-regarded individual who was the liaison on this issue, and then he was transferred to another post. The day he was transferred his files disappeared. They were erased. His electronic files were erased and the backup was erased. This is what the privacy commissioner said: "As a result of the various activities described by the deputy minister, the ministry has been unable to retrieve any electronic records left behind by the named employee at the time he left the position of special advisor First Nations." Concern about the loss of files.

Here's what then Solicitor General Runciman said. "There was a deputy minister prior to my current deputy who was in office during this ... time. Indeed we are concerned about the loss of these files in terms of our ability to retain very important and critical files. I share your concern with respect to that." Surely, knowing this matter ultimately, I hope, would be the subject of an inquiry, how could it be possible that key files were erased and the then Solicitor General, Mr Runciman, acknowledged the concerns?

We need to find out what really happened at Ipperwash. The press release the day after the shooting: "Occupants of two vehicles fired upon police officers and subsequently police returned fire." The judge of the case said, "I find that George did not have any firearms on his person when he was shot.... [T]he story of the rifle and muzzle flash was concocted ex post facto in an ill-fated attempt to disguise the fact that an unarmed man had been shot." That's the judge in reaching the decision.

Was political direction given? The Premier said, "At no time did the police receive any instructions from

anybody that I know in my caucus or my office or me or the cabinet.

"There was no direction given to the OPP before, after or during any other situation; no direction given by the government, no direction given by any of our staff, no direction given by any of the ministers." Contradictory evidence.

Notes from what's called an interministerial meeting on September 6: "D. Hutton—Premier last night—OPP only ... 'out of park only—nothing else.'" "Police have been asked to remove the occupiers from the park."

**1610**

Why did the government—or did the government—persuade the OPP to abandon its long-standing policy? The OPP are expert at this. As I say, they met on the Friday before the incident and said, "Here's what's going to happen." They laid it all out. They had a well-documented, thick plan of how they were going to handle it. They knew exactly, and it was unfolding exactly as they had predicted until that dreadful night. So I go back to, was political direction given? I present the evidence, and I believe the place to have this aired is a public inquiry. But it's part of that: "Police have been asked to remove the occupiers from the park."

Was the conduct of the local MPP appropriate? In my opinion, it wasn't. The Premier has said it was, by the way, but the local member was at the command post—this was the police command post, trying their best to manage the situation—on many occasions, including being there a mere two or three hours before the shooting death. Here is some of the evidence of what I regard as inappropriate behaviour. As I say, the Premier thought it was quite fine, but he was there at least three times, maybe four times.

This was on September 6, just a few hours before the shooting, 18:42: "Marcel Beaubien states ... that he doesn't mind taking controversy, if situation can't be handled by police services, something has to be done to handle the situation." He's right in there, right at the command post, essentially saying, "Listen, you've got to do something. Get on with it."

"Marcel Beaubien advised that he had sent a fax to the Premier advising of his intentions and that he wanted a return call regarding his intentions."

Again from September 6, the day of the shooting, "Marcel Beaubien was in tonight." Again, the day of the shooting, somewhat later, at 21:41, he "was in tonight, he had talked to the Solicitor General, and the Attorney General, they were comfortable...."

This was the police log on September 5, the day before the shooting: "Inspector Carson advised that Marcel Beaubien has been in contact with Staff Sergeant Wade Lacroix and he advised he was calling the Premier." Staff Sergeant Wade Lacroix was the individual who headed up the tactical response unit.

So I say to all of us that this is not a series of rumours; this is documented evidence available for a public inquiry. It isn't as if there's one story that has emerged. There is the government's version of what happened and

then all of this contradictory evidence that I've laid before you and the public. It is, as I say, the first death of a First Nations individual in a land claim dispute in at least 100 years. There was, tragically, an OPP officer convicted of criminal negligence involved in it. But we cannot get the Premier yet to commit to a public inquiry.

I've had occasion to talk often with the George family. The George family is a family of modest means. The government has said to date that they're not going to call a public inquiry; they're going to leave it to a civil case to find the truth in this matter. I find that objectionable in the extreme, and I will be interested in our Attorney General's defence of that as a way that we will get at the full truth in this matter.

The Premier alone has spent close to \$500,000 on legal bills defending himself. There is another group of cabinet ministers that I would speculate has spent at least that. That \$1 million of legal support for them is fighting the George family, a family of extremely modest means. This is not a fair battle.

The focus in a civil case is extremely narrow. We will not get at many of the issues that are crucial to me and in fact are fundamental in my motion, which is to say, how do we avoid similar circumstances in the future?

I said earlier that we've often talked here about Walkerton and the importance there of a fair public inquiry. No one in Ontario would sit still and expect that some family member of a victim in Walkerton would have to launch the case against the government to find out what happened in Walkerton and to find out if there were policy things that led to that, if there are ways we can avoid that in the future. Nobody would expect that. That's what the government is saying to us. It's saying, "Listen, we're not going to allow a public inquiry. We're going to force the George family to fight us tooth and nail."

This will drag on. I know the tactic. It will drag on for years. I understand why the government would want that approach. Firstly, it's an unfair battle because the George family has to fund it all. Secondly, they can drag it out. Thirdly, it does not get at many of the key aspects that need to be looked at here.

So I go back to page after page of evidence, of contradiction, where the government says one thing and then evidence presents itself, completely different. As I say, the United Nations has commented on this issue; Amnesty International has commented on it. It's a black mark on Ontario.

In my opinion, a public inquiry will be extremely dangerous for the Premier, because I think it will show that what happened there was badly handled. But the only way we'll get at the truth is with a public inquiry. To do anything less, as I say, to expect the George family to somehow or other fight the state is, frankly, obscene. So I look forward to the vote later today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further debate?

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I rise on behalf of the

government today to address the motion that is before this assembly.

Let me state at the outset, if I may, what has been discussed at various times, in fact earlier at this date as well, in this Legislature, and that is that there is a pending civil action, an action that is before the courts at this time. I say that at the outset because it is important—no, it is essential—that members of this House realize that statements made in this Legislative Assembly are public statements. They are public statements. When these statements refer to matters that are before the courts, the court case could be affected.

It is for this reason that I encourage members on both sides of this Legislature to use caution as they address the issues that are in front of us. It is the best policy for any government or any member of the Legislature. It is indeed a matter of fairness, a fundamental principle of our justice system, to refrain from commenting on matters that are pending in front of the courts of this province.

**1620**

I would refer the members of this assembly to 23(g)(i) of the standing orders. I quote from that standing order section: "In debate, a member shall be called to order by the Speaker if he ... refers to any matter that is the subject of a proceeding that is pending in a court or before a judge for judicial determination."

The government's position on this matter has been very clear. It has been clear and it has been consistent from the outset. It is based on respect for due process under the law. It is for this reason that the government has kept its remarks within this assembly rather brief. It is for this reason that the government will continue to refrain from being drawn into an improper and inappropriate debate in an inappropriate forum. It is because matters are before the court that we have risen on numerous occasions and have repeatedly stated that other options will not be considered until all court proceedings are completed.

It would be premature to make a decision or to comment further while these matters are in front of the court. Relying on the courts and due process was and is the action taken by this government.

Mr Speaker, I say to you, I say to the members of this assembly, it is and would be inappropriate to argue this case in the halls of this building. What is far more appropriate is for that discussion to go on within a courtroom of this province, a courtroom that will be presided over by an independent jurist and a courtroom in which that individual will be able to ultimately decide the issues in dispute. But what I will do over the next few minutes, for the benefit of those members opposite, is attempt to compare the civil litigation process, which is now underway in the courts dealing with this matter, with the public inquiry process, which is being proposed by the member opposite.

It is, of course, significant and must be recalled throughout this discussion that the issues that are being examined in the court action are the very same issues that

would be examined in any public inquiry, the very same issues that would be reviewed in any public inquiry. By closely examining what happens and what could happen in the two respective processes, we can perhaps put the motion before us into some reasonable context or perspective.

I think the first point that needs to be made is that a public inquiry is indeed a process that is rarely used in this province. While I'm aware that the members opposite over the last short while have asked for no fewer than 150 public inquiries on various issues, I say to you, Mr Speaker, regardless of what political stripe, regardless of who is in charge of the government of this province, it is a mechanism that has been very rarely utilized in the history of this great province.

Under the terms of the Public Inquiries Act, a public inquiry is normally launched only, and I emphasize this, when there are broad systemic issues that are involved, issues that transcend the conduct of individuals. For situations where the conduct of individuals is questioned, the civil and criminal courts of this province are well equipped to find the truth. In fact, thousands upon thousands of individual litigants have turned to the courts as a reasonable recourse, and they do so each and every day of every year.

The head of an inquiry, as I'm sure most members are aware, is normally a judge or a retired judge. While a civil proceeding is, of course, also conducted by a judge, a public inquiry is based on terms of reference that are usually handed down by the government, whereas a civil proceeding has its parameters set, its boundaries set, by the plaintiffs, who issue a statement of claims, who set out whatever issues they believe need to be resolved in the court. Of course, in this instance that is the George family, who came forward and issued a statement of claim and set out the issues that they thought needed to be addressed in a civil court. That's exactly what's happening.

The parties, the individuals involved in a civil case, are the plaintiffs and the defendants and any third parties that might be appropriately brought in. It is open to any plaintiff to name whomever they believe is appropriate, at first instance, in a civil action. They set the parameters of the lawsuit and they name the parties that are to be involved in the lawsuit. The party suing for damages establishes the issues that they believe need to be examined. That's what is going on right now in relation to the issues that my friend has referenced earlier this day.

An inquiry normally holds public hearings, and of course is not, in every instance, a proceeding that covers every issue that people involved would like to be covered. An inquiry is, by and large, open to the public. The recommendations of a public inquiry are generally broad in nature and, as I indicated earlier, generally address systemic problems, not just individual actions.

However, an important difference between public inquiries and civil actions is one that relates to the outcomes of the respective proceedings. An important

difference in outcomes between an inquiry and a court action is that an inquiry cannot make a finding of civil or criminal liability. They cannot do so.

It is true that an inquiry can, after giving due notice, include in its report what is analogous to a finding of misconduct against one or more individuals, but it cannot find them liable in a civil or in a criminal sense. In fact, under the Public Inquiries Act, evidence given to an inquiry cannot be used in a civil or a criminal court of law. It cannot be used against the people who provided that evidence to the public inquiry. Even if an inquiry finds that misconduct occurred, the aggrieved party cannot collect damages on the basis of that finding.

A civil proceeding, on the other hand—the kind that the George family choose to involve themselves in and to initiate—can clearly assign blame and impose binding consequences upon those involved.

Let's talk about the comprehensive stages of a civil action. I indicated earlier that it starts with plaintiffs coming forward, with the assistance of their counsel in most instances, and drafting a statement of claim that sets out the issues that are in dispute, issues that they are asking the court to help them address, issues that they are asking the court to help them resolve.

What happens thereafter is a very extensive discovery process, a process that involves the exchange of documents and the exchange of evidence between parties, normally known as a discovery process. In the case of the action instituted by the Georges, literally thousands of documents have been exchanged as part of this proceeding.

In due course, the parties in any civil action are given an opportunity to meet with a judge at what is known as a pretrial conference. It's important to note that the examinations for discovery—the part of a civil action that is conducted under oath, where one side gets to ask the other side questions, questions about any matter in issue, questions that are asked after the exchange of documents—are scheduled to take place in the very near future in the action in question.

Although the oral examinations for discovery are conducted behind closed doors, so to speak—in closed sessions—the transcripts from that proceeding from the court file can be and normally are accessible to the public, except in most extraordinary circumstances. Discoveries will often go on for days. This government has come forward and said that they want that process to be started soon; they want that process to be a comprehensive process.

As a result, what we have done as a government is we have gone to the court and asked the court to appoint a case manager. A case manager, in this instance, is a judge, an independent jurist, someone who is there at the request of the government to oversee the proceedings and to ensure that all appropriate documents are exchanged by the parties. That is what is underway right now.

That independent case manager is also tasked with and is performing the task of ensuring that the oral examinations for discovery take place in a timely

manner. That will occur and that will involve every party in the lawsuit being examined under oath.

### 1630

Requirements for document production, as I suspect some members of the Legislature are aware, are quite broad. Any document that relates to the matter as an issue must be produced. There is a judge in place at the request of the government who will ensure that is done completely, comprehensively and in a timely fashion.

When one proceeds forward to the trial, it is a complete and comprehensive, open process, where witnesses are examined and cross-examined. Indeed, this is the essence of our judicial system, and I believe in it. I know it works each and every day within this province to resolve disputes.

Of course, both sides make closing statements dealing with the evidence and dealing with recommendations as to how they believe the judge should rule. All court documents—transcripts, evidence, exhibits and the decision, ultimately—are ordinarily available to the public. That's the civil litigation process.

In considering the matters raised by members opposite, I am not aware of any potential finding about the causes of the events at Ipperwash that could be made by a commissioner that could not be made by a trial judge. Indeed, I am perplexed by the apparent lack of faith that the members opposite seem to have in members of our judiciary.

For hundreds of years, our court has relied on the justice system. Every year, thousands and thousands of litigants come forward to ask the courts to assist with resolving matters that are in dispute, and every year thousands and thousands of litigants achieve justice through this process. As a mechanism for the peaceful resolution of disputes, the civil courts have been a foundation stone for literally decades, centuries, and in fact since the start of this society. Yet the members opposite act as though the judicial system is some sort of inferior process.

The similarities between public inquiries and the civil action that I've talked about over the last short while are actually quite striking. The similarities are numerous. Typically, they are both presided over by judges. Both have the power to call and examine relevant witnesses and evidence. Both make their records and findings public.

The most important difference, and I emphasize this once again, is that a commission can't make findings of legal liability, whereas a judge can. There is a strong case to be made that a civil trial is indeed the better way of achieving justice for anyone who is aggrieved.

The government did not launch this civil proceeding. Let's be very clear about that. The government did not launch this civil proceeding. Other people took the government to court, which they have every right to do.

The proceeding is well underway. It has progressed significantly indeed since late 1998. A schedule has been put in place. As I indicated earlier, a case manager is in place to ensure that there is complete disclosure and that

the matter proceeds in a timely fashion. Thousands of documents have been exchanged. There will be complete disclosure in this proceeding. The case is being managed by a judge, as are all pretrial matters. I am confident that this process will ensure a swift and sure progression of the case. Numerous court appearances have already taken place. Over the next six months, all the parties will likely be examined for discovery.

There would be no point—it would be counterproductive—to start from scratch at this juncture. As the Premier has said, if at the end of the day, when the court proceedings are exhausted, there are any questions that need to be answered, that are still unanswered, the government will look at the best ways to answer those questions. The appropriate steps will be taken at that time to ensure that all of the necessary matters have been reviewed.

In the meantime, let me say again, by way of conclusion, that I have confidence in our justice system. I have confidence that the courts will answer the questions that the plaintiffs have raised and continue to raise, and that justice will be done.

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** The message that we're getting here from the Attorney General is that when faced with an issue with dramatic allegations of a serious miscarriage of justice, what the Attorney General of Ontario is saying to victims, or to those out there who want to get to the bottom of a matter, is that you're not going to get to the bottom of the matter in the Legislature; you're not going to get to the bottom of the matter through a public inquiry. The only way that you can get justice, I hear from the Attorney General of Ontario, is to sue the Premier, is to sue the Attorney General of Ontario. What is left for the Legislature to do, with the courts being the last refuge?

The Attorney General knows very well—I know he can't possibly be saying that there's no difference between a public inquiry on the one hand and a civil trial on the other hand. As he knows very well, the purpose of civil litigation is to determine the rights as between the parties, to allocate liability and to provide the remedies. On the other hand, the purpose of a public inquiry is to get to the bottom of the matter without being hindered by the same rules of evidence that accrue to the civil system, without being hindered by issues of relevance, without being hindered by the statement of claim. You've got a statement of claim which sets out precisely what the judge can and cannot consider. In a public inquiry, you have flexibility to get to the bottom of matters.

That's why we have public inquiries, says the Law Reform Commission of Canada's working paper 17, *Administrative Law: Commissions of Inquiry* (1977). It says that these investigatory commissions "possess an objectivity and freedom from time constraints not often found in the Legislature." Moreover, "they can deal with questions that do not require the application of substantive law by the courts. And they can reasonably investigate and interpret matters not wholly within the

competence of Canada's various police forces." That is the Law Reform Commission of Canada.

The Ontario Law Reform Commission writes, in their Report on Public Inquiries (1992), "The flexibility of the [Public Inquiries Act] reflects the perceived need to ensure that commissions of inquiry are not constrained by the strict laws of evidence" defended by the Attorney General of Ontario. "As early as 1922, the courts have held that the admissibility of evidence at a public inquiry should not 'be governed by the strict rules of evidence.' But rather by a broad test of whether or not its admission appears to be in the public interest."

That is the point of a public inquiry. It is to say that, yes, we are going to have rules of procedure, but they are not going to be hampered by the various rights owed to all citizens who go before the courts. Public inquiries are different: the point is to get to the bottom of the matter. There are no technicalities, as it were, where the lawyers can stand up and say, "Objection," and something that we know we would want to find out, that we would want to get to the bottom of, we do not hear in civil litigation for the simple reason that there are rules of evidence prohibiting that. That's why they set up public inquiries.

Furthermore, the purpose of public inquiries is to make recommendations in terms of the way in which we govern ourselves as Ontarians, to get to the bottom of an issue and to proceed with recommendations. A judge cannot stand up and make recommendations to the province of Ontario as to how we ought to proceed in the future. It's like the difference between a coroner's inquest and a civil trial. I've never heard this government suggest they should be lumped into the same category.

Under civil litigation, it has been said—this is Judge Dickson, the Supreme Court of Canada—"The duty of the court, as I envisage it, is to proceed in the discharge of its adjudicative function in a reasoned way from principled decision and established concepts." But, Cardozo says, "This judge, even when he is free, is still not wholly free. He is not to innovate at pleasure. He is not a knight-errant, roaming at will in pursuit of his own ideal of ... goodness." He must "draw his inspiration from" specific "consecrated principles."

The principles driving a public inquiry are very different. They aren't the technical provisions and principles of hearsay, of evidence, of relevance. It's about getting to the bottom of matters and it's about making recommendations. It's not about the bottom line of who owes what to whom. That's what a civil litigation is all about. Rather, it's about doing the public good and advancing the public interest.

We have heard nothing from the government to explain why it is that they didn't ask the victims of Walkerton to finance a public inquiry through civil litigation. They didn't do that because they know the outrage that would have spread across this province—all those victims, the thousands of sick, the people dead. Of course we wouldn't get to the bottom of Walkerton that way. But here's the George family: not thousands, this is one family trying to proceed alone and get to the bottom

of the matter through the worst tool possible; in this case, civil litigation.

**1640**

The position taken by the government of Ontario and in particular by the Attorney General of Ontario, who is charged under the Ministry of the Attorney General Act to safeguard the administration of justice and in fact to sometimes step aside from cabinet and say, "That may be the right political thing to do, but here's the right thing to do. Here's the right thing to do in accordance with the rule of law. Here's what we've done in the past, and here's what we ought to do in this case"—

We have to get to the bottom of this, not handcuffed and hampered by the very excellent but in this case unnecessary, unwarranted, and unwanted rules of civil procedure. We need to get to the truth, and we're not going to get to the truth through civil litigation. I call upon this House to support a public inquiry.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** First of all, let me state at the outset of the debate on this motion that the NDP caucus will be supporting this motion. It is similar to motions that have been introduced in this House at least two or three times before by both us, the New Democrats, and the Liberals to try to get the provincial government to hold a public inquiry on what has been known as the Dudley George matter.

I want to say this is one of the issues that I think bothers a number of us in the Legislature probably more than many others that we've seen come through this place, because we know there are a couple of facts on how this whole issue has arisen that really give us discomfort. Number one is that we understand there was a policy within the Ontario Provincial Police, as a result of years of experience in dealing with protests of both First Nations people and non-First Nations people, and they learned that the best way to deal with an issue is not by going in with guns ablazing, but rather to try to stand back, wait, allow people to vent their frustration, allow people to demonstrate and to say what's on their minds and then try to negotiate the matter.

It has always been a long-standing policy of the Ontario Provincial Police that has evolved over a period of years and through experiences that I'll talk about later that they learned that you don't run in with guns, you don't push a confrontation. You try to defuse the situation and allow things to work themselves out by calm and peaceful negotiations on both parts. What's really frustrating to all of us is that there was a marked departure from that policy after the election of Mike Harris in 1995. I will say for the record, and I feel fairly confident in saying this, that if Mike Harris had not been the government in the fall of 1995, there would not have been the type of reaction by the Ontario Provincial Police at Ipperwash, and Dudley George would be alive. No government, I believe—Bill Davis, David Peterson or Bob Rae—would have ever rushed in, guns ablazing. In fact, we learned by what's happened over the years.

For example, I remember back in the late 1980s. As you remember, there were a number of issues going on

within the province of Ontario that affected First Nations people, rightfully so. First Nations people were starting to work at, and have been working quite hard at, trying to get the public aware of their issues as they affect their communities and how treaties have been signed and treaties have not been respected by both federal and provincial governments. Rightfully so, the First Nations people across this province have taken to the streets, as we say, in order to publicly protest what has happened to their people over the last century. There have been all kinds of atrocities, not only broken treaties but, by and large, an assimilation policy on the part of both the federal and provincial governments to basically wipe out the way of life of indigenous people of this land. Rightfully so, they're fighting back in the best way they know how, and that is by peaceful protests and by way of the courts.

What's happened in this particular case is that, yes, First Nations people have gone to the streets; yes, they've mounted blockades; yes, they have protested—but always within the confines of the law. It's important to note that that is one of the basic tenets of our society, that as a citizen and as a group of people, you should be able to gather, to publicly protest and to express your concern about an issue, provided you do that within the confines of the law. Clearly that's what's been going on. The provincial police have learned over the years that the best way to deal with these issues, quite frankly, is to allow things to take their own course, allow issues to defuse themselves to a certain extent, and then at the appropriate time enter into the debate and try to find a negotiated settlement. By and large that has worked.

I was a member of a government from 1990 to 1995 that had to deal with a lot of issues as they related to First Nations people. We had to deal with a number of issues as a government as they approached us with issues. Not only First Nations people but other people were out protesting government decisions or old, standing issues that they were trying to bring attention to. We understood as a government that we had to develop policies that helped the provincial police to deal with these issues so that they didn't become inflamed to the point of not being able to deal with them. So I know, as a government member from 1990 to 1995, that whenever there were these types of issues that arose, the provincial police did not go in guns ablazing. That's what's so darn frustrating in this particular debate, that we all know what's happened: the government changed that policy almost overnight, the government put pressure on the Ontario Provincial Police to rush in, and as a result somebody was killed.

What is even more frustrating is the way things unfolded that day. A local politician, a First Nations politician of the community, seeing the police rushing on, seeing the police sort of mount their presence at Stoney Point, basically went out to try to calm things down, went out with the bullhorn trying to tell the police to back down, to relax, not to get too excited, just back off and let his own people deal with trying to calm things down on

their side as well. What happened was the Ontario Provincial Police rushed this individual and started beating him with clubs. In fact, 10 officers beat him to a point of unconsciousness. That's what precipitated everything happening after. A local native politician who stood up, who tried to defuse things, who was trying to help both his people and the Ontario Provincial Police to defuse things, was rushed by the Ontario Provincial Police and was beaten. From there, they tried to hold things back by one of the elders in the community asking that a bus be put between the provincial police and the protesters so that they would be protected from the police. They were trying to protect themselves. Instead, the Ontario Provincial Police opened fire. There were a few people who were shot, certainly the driver of the bus, and Dudley George was killed.

The provincial police then said, "The reason we opened fire was because we saw people with guns firing back at us." That didn't stand up in the court case. It was proven there were no guns, there was no ammunition, there were no spent shells, there was nothing on the side of the protesters to indicate there were any kinds of firearms involved. The only firearms were on the side of the police.

What bothers me is that that is not in keeping with how the Ontario Provincial Police operate. They do not rush in. They don't go in guns blazing. They are one of the most professional forces in the world when it comes to dealing with issues like this. It is my view and I think the view of many other people that what in fact happened was that the provincial government told the provincial police to go in guns blazing, basically, not to go in shooting but to put up a show of force and to push the protesters out of the park by any which way they could. That gave licence to some people within the police to go out and do what happened.

What has been frustrating is that our former critic, Bud Wildman, who led the charge on this issue from 1995 on, certainly our leader, Howard Hampton, Mr Phillips from the Liberal Party and myself and others have been trying to force the government into a public inquiry so that we can get to the bottom of it. If the government says what all the evidence points to is wrong, that in fact they didn't order the police into the park, that they didn't encourage the police to the show of force, that they didn't encourage the police to rush in, if the government feels so confident about that, then call a public inquiry. The civil case is not going to deal with that issue.

I was just dumbfounded that the Attorney General stood up here and said, and I use his quotes, "The proper place for somebody to get justice is by way of a civil trial." I just shake my head and say, "Don't come in here lecturing to us how this system works, because we've been around here a little bit longer than you have, and in fact that's not the way you do things."

A public inquiry is about getting to the bottom of an issue and trying to figure out what went wrong so that at the end of the day we can prevent the same thing from happening again. That's what it's about. It's not so much

about who was right and who was wrong and assigning blame. It's about finding out what happened so that we put in place the mechanisms for it not to happen again. For the government to all of a sudden come in here and say, "Oh, no, that's not the way you do things. You do it by way of a civil trial," is really something else.

#### 1650

There was another comment he made that I thought was interesting. He said, "The fundamental principle of our system is for us not to comment." I take it he was talking about the court case. I would think the fundamental principle of our legal system is to get to the truth and make sure the right thing is done by way of the victims or others.

I want to go through some of the evidence that's been brought to the House on a number of occasions, and just try to say to the government that certainly the evidence I'm about to present, that's been talked about in this House before—you've got to agree there's a whole bunch of questions that have to be answered.

The first is the whole question of the government saying it denies any involvement in ordering the police into the park. I want to use a couple of quotes from both the media and from here through Hansard. One of the comments made on November 5, 1996, by Mike Harris in Hansard says, "At no time did the police receive any instructions from anybody that I know in my caucus or my office or me or the cabinet." So it's fairly clear he's saying, "Nobody from our side actually ordered the police in."

On April 22, 1997, again a quote from Hansard, Premier Mike Harris said here in the House: "There was no direction given to the OPP before, after or during any other situation; no direction given by the government, no direction given by any of our staff, no direction given by any of the ministers."

That flies in the face of what was said on September 6, 1995. This is an excerpt from the notes of a meeting that took place: "Now OPP commissioner is involved. Decision will be made at his level. He was called into cabinet." A particular bureaucrat who was there was also eloquent. He cautioned repeatedly about rushing in: "An ex parte injunction. Can't interfere." Basically, this bureaucrat—first of all, what this proves is that the comments made by the Premier on both November 5 and April 22 don't match with the evidence of notes that were taken at the cabinet meeting, because it says, "The OPP commissioner is now involved. Decision will be made at his level. He was called into cabinet." That's contrary to what the Premier said: "I know my caucus or my office or me or the cabinet had nothing to do with this." Clearly the commissioner was brought before cabinet, and it was to discuss this issue. How can the Premier say he knew nothing of it?

Then the bureaucrat who was there was basically trying to explain to the cabinet that this is not the way to do things, this was a departure from how things are done to defuse a situation, and eloquently argued that the government should not go in with guns blazing. But "the

Premier and Hodgson came out strong," says the note from the cabinet meeting on September 6, 1995.

"The Premier and Hodgson came out strong." That indicates from their own notes—these are not notes we took; these are notes of their own officials who were at that meeting, who said, "The Premier and Mr Hodgson," the then Chair of Management Board, "came out strong," supposedly in favour of pushing the OPP in by force.

Further to that, other evidence of things that were said in this House and afterwards—again, this by Mike Harris in Hansard on November 5, 1996: "At no time did the police receive any instructions from anybody that I know in my caucus or my office or me or the cabinet." He said it again. Then on April 22, 1997, Mike Harris said, "There was no direction given to the OPP before, after or during any other situation; no direction given by the government, no direction given by any of our staff, no direction given by any of the ministers."

Then you go back and read what was in the excerpts from notes that were taken in a ministerial meeting on September 6, 1995, which were released under the freedom of information act. I believe the notes are from Deb Hutton, who says, "Premier last night. OPP only. Maybe MNR. Out of park only. Nothing else." The Premier is trying to say he had nothing to do with it, but basically his own chief of staff—one of the key people in his office—was fairly clear in her notes about what was said.

Minutes from the same ministerial meeting of September 6, 1995: "Police have been asked to remove the occupiers from the park." That implies again that there had been a change in policy and that the government had interfered.

Again, from a former government official who was present at the interministerial meeting—a quote taken from a CP story which appeared in the Kingston Whig-Standard, August 1, 1997: "The bureaucrats were really shocked with what Deb Hutton told them because that was not the way they did things...." Again, it goes to my point that the government changed the way the Ontario Provincial Police deals with these matters. I say what I said at the beginning: if the original policy had been upheld—if it had still been us as a government—I don't believe the OPP would have gone in there, because they would not have wanted to do it that way.

What's interesting is that when you read the notes from the officers who were on the scene—there is a repeated number of notes, and I don't have enough time to go through them all—they basically say, "We want more time. We don't want to rush in. We believe this is wrong. We want to be able to negotiate." The police themselves in their own notes were feeling pushed by the government, and they were looking for time to be able to deal with this issue as they've dealt with other issues by way of negotiations and trying to bring calm.

I'm just going to take a few more minutes, because I know our future Premier, Mr Hampton, wants to say a few things about this.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):**  
Thank you.

**Mr Bisson:** You're quite welcome. I like calling you Premier; it's a good thing.

The other point about the involvement is a comment on August 18, 1997, from Mike Harris: "I determined nothing. I gave no direction. I gave no influence on it. We left that entirely to the OPP. I assumed there would be negotiations." That flies in the face of what the OPP, who were present, had in their own notebooks. They clearly demonstrate in their notes that they were being pushed by the government to go in. They were asking for more time. Somebody from the government side was trying to push them.

Mike Harris, December 4, 1996, again out of Hansard: "I think it's a very huge stretch for you to suggest the OPP did anything different," again referring to the way they did things. But when you look at the evidence—again, a couple of comments out of a few places. A headline in the Sarnia Observer September 6, 1995—this was before they actually went in and did the rush on Ipperwash park—says: "Queen's Park to take a hard line with occupiers: Beaubien." Clearly there was discussion going on about trying to take a hard line with the First Nations people in that area.

The minutes from the interministerial meeting on September 6 say: "Police have been asked to remove the occupiers from the park." Clearly, somebody gave the order.

Again, September 6, 1995, a police log, Ipperwash Command Centre: "We want a little bit more time." Clearly the police were fighting back and saying, "No, we don't want to do this. We don't believe escalating is going to solve this."

Another note, OPP "Project Maple," distributed on the evening of September 4, 1995: "Objective: To contain and negotiate a peaceful resolution." What's clear through here is that the OPP didn't want to rush in, but they were being pushed in.

There are reams and reams of evidence that demonstrates that the government influenced the decision of the Ontario Provincial Police. The Premier says he never met with the commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police, but we know that he did by his own admission. Evidence shows there was basically a change in the way the Ontario Provincial Police moved on this issue. Normally they would have tried to negotiate. That was their preferred method of operation. What's clear is the notes that were taken at the interministerial meeting: "Get them 'expletive' Indians out of the park," is what Mike Harris said. That is in the notes. There's evidence after evidence after evidence that demonstrates it was none other than the cabinet of Ontario, none other than Mike Harris himself, aided by his member from the area, Mr Beaubien, who wanted to escalate this issue to get the First Nations people out of the park. For that reason I think there is enough evidence out there to cast a large shadow of doubt, that in fact the police were affected by the provincial government and there should be a public

inquiry in the name of justice for the George family and to make sure something like this never happens again.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):** I join the Attorney General and all members of the House in expressing my sorrow, as we all do, at the untimely death that occurred in September 1995 at the Ipperwash Provincial Park. This was a tragedy that has impacted on many lives. As you know, as a result of these events, criminal charges were laid and a civil action has begun. That civil action, as has been stated by the Attorney General, is still before the court. With this in mind, I think we should all—certainly I am going to—preface our remarks today by acknowledging the extreme care that I will be taking in this debate.

1700

The principal argument that I would submit to my friends in the opposition is that we must take care not to make any comments of any sort that would prejudice this civil action before the courts or indeed the rights of the parties before the courts. Our government's position on this matter is based on respect of due process of the law. We cannot be drawn into improper debate. It's with this in mind that I'm responding to the resolution that has been put forward by Mr Phillips, the member for Scarborough-Agincourt.

In the resolution, the member opposite requests an independent inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act into the events at Ipperwash Provincial Park. These events, we would all agree, are tragic. As we all know, on September 5 and 6, 1995, some members of the Kettle and Stoney Point First Nation occupied the Ipperwash Provincial Park, adjacent to Camp Ipperwash. There was a confrontation and Dudley George, a member of the First Nation, was fatally shot and two other individuals were injured. I know that all members of the House will join me in my hope that such an unfortunate event never occurs again.

The opposition wants a public inquiry to review all the facts behind Ipperwash and they are demanding that this inquiry take place right away. This is inappropriate. Right now, there's a legal process underway that will perform this task and will determine the appropriate response. Not only could a public inquiry interfere with this ongoing legal process, but I would submit to you it is not necessary.

The members opposite have brought forward specific issues, and they've said that there are unanswered questions that can only be responded to in a public inquiry. I say to them that these questions can be and will be dealt with in the civil action that's before the court. Mr Phillips, the member from Scarborough-Agincourt, has outlined these questions, or some of these questions, in his comments to the House: What decisions were made? Who gave the orders to the OPP to confront the protesters? What role did government members play? What documents were generated? If these are indeed representative of their questions, these responses will be ascertained at trial, the trial that is going on as this Legislature now sits. That's exactly what's occurring.

I'd like to state the obvious, and that is to consider the process of a trial. To prepare for trial, there's going to be an examination for discovery. There will be documents and exhibits presented and itemized. This process is going on now. During the trial there will be testimony, there will be witnesses, there will be experts, and there will be cross-examination of all of these individuals. The trial is open to the public. People can listen to all the evidence and subsequently to the proceedings. They can obtain from the court office copies of court documents. It's an entirely open process. As you are aware, the findings of a trial judge are binding. I'm not aware of any findings that could not be made by a judge that could be made by a commission of inquiry.

To the extent that findings are made by the commissioner, the commissioner does not have greater authority than a judge. In fact, he or she may have less authority, depending on the terms of reference of the commission. Certainly, a commissioner cannot make findings of fault; a trial judge can, which is comparable to a judge in a civil or criminal proceeding.

The point that I'm making is that a trial action, a civil trial, is not an inferior process to a public inquiry, as has been suggested by the opposition this afternoon. The point is that the trial is the process that nations have adopted over hundreds of years. I would say that I am certainly appalled at the opposition, who are apparently suggesting that the justice system is flawed and that it cannot answer the questions that a public inquiry could answer, that it could not deliver justice. It's most appalling that you'd come forward with that position. The court system is the backbone of the judicial system. To suggest that the issues of Ipperwash cannot be canvassed and determinations cannot be appropriately made in such a forum is irresponsible.

It is the position of our government that a public inquiry should not occur until the civil proceedings are completed. As has been previously stated in this House, when all court actions are disposed of, if it is felt that there are questions still unanswered, our government would look to the best ways to answer these questions. I emphasize, however, that we will consider other options only after the matters before the court have been exhausted.

As I've previously said and as we all acknowledge, the tragedy at Ipperwash was terrible. That day in 1995 had an enormous impact within Ontario and on the local community, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal people alike. It's always dreadful when individuals lose their lives.

It's important that we be clear on one particular point. Relying on the courts and the due process of law was the approach taken by the government. Our government is co-operating fully. The government is providing documentation. The government will respond when the time comes for oral discovery. I'm confident that the government will comply with the civil case to the fullest extent of the law.

We also believe that this issue is in the forum where it belongs: fair and complete and being considered by an impartial judge. I join all members in this House in hoping that a situation like this never again occurs.

Through a civil trial, we've had an opportunity to get to the root of the problem. We can examine all issues in a way that is far more effective than by a public inquiry. Therefore, it is the position of this government that a public inquiry is inappropriate while civil legal proceedings are ongoing. Our government has stated that we will consider other options only after matters before the courts have been exhausted. We are also of the strong belief that a court trial is absolutely the best and most effective response to this issue.

For the reasons I have stated, our government will not be supporting this resolution of the member opposite which asks for a public inquiry on the events that occurred at Ipperwash Provincial Park.

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** I still continue to puzzle on why there has not been an inquiry to this point in time. I think it is absolutely important that we, as legislators, establish and follow a process and put in place a process to ensure that something like this never happens again.

I do hear the government's concern that it would interfere with the civil trial and you can't have a public inquiry and the civil trial. My simple answer to that is: Walkerton. I heard the explanation at the beginning of the Walkerton issue that we couldn't have a public inquiry till we determined whether there would be civil trials, but I note with great interest that the public inquiry has gone ahead and is proceeding at this very moment. Obviously there is the legal possibility of the two of them happening at the same time.

Surely, from the government viewpoint, it is in their best interest to clear the air. Years have gone by now, with innuendo, with rumours, with concern. It is in everyone's best interest, including the government members, to determine exactly what happened, exactly how it happened, so that it will never happen again. The judges themselves are not going to have the freedom to render the recommendations that may come out of this. We don't know until the inquiry is held.

The problem I have with the delay, though, is that every one of us suffers from the problem of memory and memories changing. This needs to happen now while the key persons involved in this remember exactly what happened in that event.

1710

**Mr Hampton:** I want to put just a couple of things on the record. Some of the positions the government has taken today, and some of the positions the government has taken in the past, in my view need to be reflected upon by people across Ontario.

I want everyone to keep in mind that what happened here is that an unarmed man, an innocent man, was killed; not only that, but an innocent man, an unarmed man, was killed by the police. Ordinarily, in that kind of situation, we would almost automatically see a public

inquiry called to ascertain how such an unfortunate and terrible event could have happened. But from the beginning, the government has found excuse after excuse to avoid having a public inquiry into the events surrounding the death of Dudley George. The government has used every opportunity to frustrate.

I heard one of the government members say here earlier today that the government prefers that this be handled in a civil court. The only reason this matter is before a civil court is because the government refuses to have a public inquiry. The government is literally forcing individual citizens to hold the government accountable. That in itself is incredible in a jurisdiction which would call itself a democracy: that the government does not want to hold a public inquiry to ascertain why something happened and to ascertain who should be held accountable. No, the government wants to force private citizens to go to court and literally, in this case, sue the government of the day. What a travesty of justice and what a travesty of democracy. That's the initial context, the initial problem here.

But as we've seen over the last five years, a number of other events have unfolded which make this travesty even worse. We now know that the Ontario Provincial Police, in going into the park, breached their own operative guidelines, which in effect call for OPP to conduct discussions and to try to find ways to de-escalate these kinds of situations, rather than going in and forcing a confrontation and escalating the situation. To me, there is a question there that begs to be answered: what could it have been, who could it have been, which would have required the OPP to breach their own guidelines, to breach their own code of conduct for the way in which these kinds of situations are to be handled?

Second, we have learned over the last five years that there is a series of manuals which set out how the OPP tactical squad is to be utilized and in what way they are not be utilized. We know that the OPP code of conduct for the operation of its tactical squad actually resulted from some very unfortunate things that happened in the 1980s, where innocent people were shot by police tactical squads. So these guidelines were put in place, this code of conduct was put in place, to ensure that didn't happen again. But what clearly happened at Ipperwash is that the OPP for some reason overrode their own tactical code of conduct, their own code of conduct which sets out the operational procedure for OPP tactical operations. What could have done that? Who could have done that? What force or what persuasion was applied to the OPP that would have them disregard their own operational code of conduct? It seems to me that those two questions alone cry out for a public inquiry. What could cause the police to deviate from their normal mode of operations? What could cause the police to move away from their own operational codes of conduct which every officer is trained in? Those questions alone cry out for a public inquiry.

But then, over the last five years, we have had pieces of memoranda come forward which indicate that there

were, first of all, discussions between the Premier and members of his staff which indicated to get the something-or-other Indians out of the park. There were cabinet meetings, or at least some members of cabinet met to discuss this issue, either the day before or the day of the shooting. We need to know what the connection is between those things and the deviation of the OPP from their customary, in fact their required, modes of conduct. What was the influence? It seems to me, since we're dealing with government operations here, this calls out for a commission of inquiry, a public inquiry into how this could have happened.

But finally, we have had, over the last while, situations where the Premier himself cannot remember or has changed his account of what happened. He indicates that he was at a meeting one day but then on another occasion indicates that the meeting didn't take place. Then on another occasion he indicates that he can't remember if there was a meeting and he can't remember if he was there. Now, I'm not talking about Stockwell Day here and his inability to remember; I'm talking about the Premier of Ontario. I'm talking about an incident where an innocent, unarmed man was shot and killed.

It would seem to me that this, too, cries out for a public inquiry. How could this happen? How could the police deviate from their normal operational codes of behaviour, and what was the linkage between directives or meetings held by cabinet members and what happened? How is it that the Premier has changed his story now, not once, not twice, but apparently three times as to what meetings took place, whether or not he was at them and what influence they had upon the course of events?

Now, to say that this could all be handled in a private lawsuit suggests that whenever there is government wrong, the only recourse the citizens of the province will have is that they will have to go out and they'll have to be wealthy enough to launch a private lawsuit. It indicates that that is the level to which accountability has fallen in Ontario, that government is not prepared to be held accountable, that government agencies and government operatives are not prepared to be held accountable. Not only that, but beyond that, they do not want to have any process where the people of the province can even find out what happened. They do not want to have a process where people can even find out the elementary facts of what happened, what took place. That is indeed a travesty in a jurisdiction which tries to claim that it is a democracy and tries to claim that it follows certain rules of accountability.

It seems to me that the more information comes out, the more we see clear and obvious reasons why there needs to be a public inquiry into the events surrounding the death of Dudley George.

1720

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton):** I'm very pleased to rise and speak on the opposition day resolution.

Let me begin by adding my sympathy for the family and friends who today are still mourning the loss of Dudley George.

I believe that everyone in this House would agree that his death was a tragedy. However, there are those in this House who refuse to acknowledge that as a result of this occurrence a civil action is currently before the courts for determination. They refuse to acknowledge that extreme care must be taken in making any comments that might prejudice the work of our courts. Because statements made within the Legislature are public statements, we all of us have a responsibility to ensure that our comments are appropriate and will not have an impact on cases currently being heard.

Our government respects the due process of law and will continue to respect that process. The court proceedings undertaken by the George family and others must be completed before other options can be considered.

My colleagues across the way continue to try to put the cart before the horse. They insist that a public inquiry should be held now, before the court has completed its work. It is important to all concerned to allow justice to run its course. The work of the court must be allowed to proceed without hindrance or interference. To suggest that a public inquiry be held while the case is underway, and that the inquiry would not have an effect on the civil suit, is at best disingenuous.

A public inquiry is normally held on issues of broad public interest, not individual actions. The commissioner conducts the inquiry. He has commission counsel who presents the evidence and calls witnesses. Those with standing might also, at the commissioner's discretion, be able to present evidence and call witnesses. At the end of the day, the commissioner, based on the terms of reference of the inquiry, makes determinations or findings. However, he or she does not make findings of fault comparable to a judge in a civil or criminal proceeding.

A public inquiry is meant to identify flaws in the system and ways to improve the system, whatever the system might be that is under examination. But to the extent that findings are made by the commissioner, he or she does not have greater authority than a judge to make findings regarding the conduct of individuals.

In this context, one wonders what the opposition is trying to gain by political grandstanding and demands for an immediate public inquiry. Our government has the utmost respect for the law. We are, as is proper, awaiting the outcome of the civil proceedings now before the court. No other course of action is appropriate. Our government has every confidence in the justice system. We respect and uphold the rule of law in our role as parliamentarians. Our government is following the traditional and appropriate steps in dealing with this situation.

These steps have not been taken on the spur of the moment. We are following guideposts set down through years of experience. It is the position of our government

that a public inquiry is inappropriate while the civil proceedings are ongoing.

We have a responsibility to ensure that all individuals receive the justice they deserve. Part of that responsibility includes refraining from comment on matters currently being dealt with by the courts. To do otherwise is irresponsible and risks compromising the integrity of the court's work.

We, as parliamentarians, have many responsibilities: as administrators, as lawmakers and as representatives of the people of Ontario. I take those responsibilities very seriously. When I was elected as the representative for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, I realized how important it was not only to recognize where my responsibilities lie, but also where my responsibilities end. I am not, for example, responsible for the administration of justice within the court system. The separation of politics and the legal system is a basic tenet of our parliamentary democracy. We understand that and we take all necessary steps to ensure that the separation is maintained. By the same token, I cannot comment on issues before the courts, because by the very nature of our work in the public eye, any comment could have an adverse effect on a judge's deliberations.

As I said, the separation of politics and the legal system is a basic tenet of our parliamentary democracy. We understand that and we take all necessary steps to ensure that separation is maintained.

Is the party opposite suggesting the court will not do its work? Are they suggesting the justice system is biased or not competent to fully explore the issues now before it? If that is the case, then I would suggest that their lack of respect for the conscientious, dedicated jurists and legal specialists who have devoted their lives to the pursuit of justice says far more about them than about the justice system.

A decision was made to pursue this matter through the courts. That is a fact. Given that reality, we are prepared to allow the courts the time needed to deal fairly and appropriately with the issues. Once that process is complete, the government will fully examine whatever next steps are required. It serves no one's interests to pursue other options before the work of the courts is complete. I would suggest it is only appropriate that they do the same.

I would now like to turn the attention of the House to another aspect of the issue; that is the effect this tragedy has had on the community of Lambton county. For native and non-native alike, the healing process has been a slow one, but it is my hope that the two groups have found new reasons to work together, to form stronger bonds and to reach out in friendship and respect, because that is the only way a community grows: by demonstrating respect for each individual's values and goals.

I believe that we, as a Legislature, would do well to take that philosophy to heart. I accept that the opposition wants simply to ensure the George family receives the justice the law provides, and I would hope the opposition will come to understand that our government must

exercise great caution in its public comments and wait until the appropriate time before making any decisions on further actions.

Finally, I would like to add a personal word of thanks to the Attorney General. Both he and his predecessor have done a remarkable job of balancing dual responsibilities as Attorney General and as minister responsible for native affairs. Both men have made a tremendous effort to reach out to Ontario's native communities. They have met with representatives of the aboriginal community and have travelled long distances to take part in community events. They continue to represent native interests across all ministries in our government, to other provincial governments and at the federal table. On behalf of my caucus colleagues, I would like to thank them for their work to help people who represent such an integral part of our cultural mosaic.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** Let me tell the government members who have been speaking to this motion today what it is the opposition wants here. We are simply trying to get justice for Dudley George. When we stand here and talk about Dudley George, we're talking about an unarmed young man who was killed, who was shot. When we stand here, I would advise the government members not to talk about us being disingenuous in our approach. I think the obvious question to ask here is, what is the government trying to hide and why are government members stonewalling here? It seems to be passing by them every day, every time it's mentioned, that the relatives of Dudley George have said very clearly that should the government agree to a public inquiry, they would drop the civil lawsuit.

Why should the grieving relatives and family of a man who was killed in his prime, who are having to pick up the pieces and deal with their grief and sorrow and anger and pain from the death of a loved one and the aftermath of that—we all know the story. If not, we should be reminded of what happened after Dudley George was shot. His relatives put him in a car, because an ambulance didn't show up, and had to drive this man who was shot to a hospital themselves; and then, when they got to the hospital, they were taken away. They couldn't even be there with Dudley George.

1730

**Mr Bisson:** They were arrested.

**Ms Churley:** They arrested the family members who were with him and Dudley George died there alone.

When the government stands up and uses the argument that they have to divide politics from the law, my blood boils. When they stand up and say that this is in the best interests of the Dudley George family, my blood boils. It is insulting to the family.

We all know a civil court case, particularly one that's been dragged on and on like this, costs thousands—I don't know, perhaps hundreds of thousands—of dollars. Where is that family going to get the money when the government has unlimited resources? Did you ever think of that when you stand up and self-righteously say that this is the best process for the Dudley George family? Let

me say, it is not. They're struggling to find the resources to keep this court case going.

I would submit to you it is my view that that is part of the government's plan here, to wear the other side down, that eventually they'll just have to give it up because they won't have the money. That's not going to happen. Some of us have been involved and will continue to be involved in helping this family raise the money that's necessary to carry this court case through to its completion and to get to the bottom of what happened here.

I want to say to the government members, they should meet with the family of Dudley George, his relatives, and see the grief and see the struggle they've been put through on a daily basis because the government refuses to do the right thing, the proper thing and the thing that we have a legal ruling that they can do, and that is hold an inquiry. That would save the family. Haven't they been through enough? They've lost a loved one. Something really terrible happened and we have to get to the bottom of it, not just for the justice that we're crying out for, for Dudley George and his family, but all of the First Nations people in this province. Something terrible happened here and we have to get to the bottom of it and find out what happened so it doesn't happen again.

The government has chosen to go a route which, in my view, puts us in the position where we may never find out what happened, and that truly frightens me. We all know that many people in this Legislature, as well as many people outside this Legislature—and let me take this opportunity to congratulate Mr Gerry Phillips from Scarborough-Agincourt, my leader Howard Hampton, Bud Wildman and many others on their absolute persistence in not letting the government off the hook on this issue. I congratulate Mr Phillips for bringing this resolution before us today, because it's easy after a while to forget. The fact that Mr Phillips has this before us today is forcing the government once again to listen to the facts here.

**Mr Bisson:** The same motion was introduced by us.

**Ms Churley:** The same motion was introduced by the NDP. When was that?

**Mr Bisson:** A couple of times.

**Ms Churley:** A couple of times. This issue has been brought up time and time again, and the government keeps coming up with more and more excuses as to why it's not appropriate to have a public inquiry. The excuse that's given time and time again—and it doesn't work any more. Perhaps it worked to some extent before the Walkerton inquiry was called. Talk about being disingenuous. It's so ridiculous, it's hard to sit here and listen to it. We have instigated by this government a Walkerton inquiry. The circumstances are very similar. There really isn't any difference. Yet that is being ignored when the government stands up and explains, oh, so patiently and the Attorney General in a most patronizing way explains to members who have been around this place for some time now the difference

between a public inquiry and a court case. Mr Speaker, we have a fairly clear understanding of that.

I would say to you, if the government had proceeded this way with Walkerton after the deaths there—which they tried to do, if people will recall, at the beginning. It was because of pressure from both the opposition parties and the public that we ended up getting the government to agree to a public inquiry. But if you'll recall, they were making the very same arguments then that they are now still, all these years after Dudley George was killed, as to why they couldn't have it. Something changed overnight, and what changed overnight is that they knew that they politically couldn't get away with not having a public inquiry in that case. In this case they feel, because it is one First Nations man who was killed, that politically they can get away with it.

Shame on them. I would say that they should remember that a man died. His family, of very little financial means, are stuck having to be the ones to find justice. That is wrong and inappropriate, and they should support this resolution today.

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** I hope that every member supports the motion by the member for Scarborough-Agincourt calling again, one more time, for a public inquiry into the death of Dudley George. It's about time this government comes to grips and says, "We have to shed light. We want to bring this case to rest. We want to make justice." I hope we all support the motion by the member for Scarborough-Agincourt.

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** I am honoured to rise to speak in support of this motion. I want to speak to three different things: conviction, courage and cowardice; more specifically, one man's conviction, one family's courage and one government's cowardice.

I want to start by once again saluting the conviction shown by my colleague the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. Gerry Phillips's record on this makes it perfectly clear that he is deeply committed to finding the truth about Ipperwash. He has worked tirelessly both behind the scenes and in the public eye to get at the truth. His work is a testament to this man's decency, his work ethic and his commitment to doing simply what is right. It is proof that in this age of cynicism, this place is still quite relevant, if only because one MPP can still make a very real and positive difference.

The member for Scarborough-Agincourt would be the first to tell you that his contribution has been small compared to that made by the George family. Now, this is a family that has shown enormous courage. This family suffered the deepest personal loss that one could imagine when Dudley George was shot dead in a protest outside Ipperwash Provincial Park. They lost someone they loved, suddenly and without warning and without explanation. One would understand if they simply walked away and took the usual time that families take to heal. But instead, they have taken on the most powerful interests in this province. They are not seeking revenge, they are not seeking attention and they are surely not

seeking personal gain. All they are seeking is the truth—the truth about Ipperwash.

#### 1740

Despite modest resources, the George family has fought for the truth for six gruelling years. They have fought in the courts and they have fought in the court of public opinion. They have fought tirelessly and courageously. The question, of course, that begs to be answered is, why has it been such a long and difficult fight? Because of the cowardice of the government.

Simply put, this government is afraid of the truth, and a government that hides the truth is not worthy of the people it is elected to serve. The family was given no choice but to bring a suit against the Premier and members of his cabinet. To say otherwise is to talk fiction. But the ministers have ignored the courts. They have effectively thwarted justice. They've used all kinds of stalling tactics. Their version of what happened has been known to change from time to time to suit their convenience. The Premier's own version of the truth recently changed.

The government's disregard for the courts is only exceeded by the disregard it has shown for the George family. It's ironic that a government that so overreacted to a roadblock at Ipperwash has thrown up roadblock after roadblock in front of the George family. You have to ask, what is it that this government is so terribly afraid of?

Months ago, Ian Urquhart of the Toronto Star put it eloquently in a column when he wrote the following: "There is one downside to a cover-up, no matter how well it's executed. It tells everyone that there is something to hide." If the government has nothing to hide, then surely it will support this motion and it will set up a commission of inquiry.

The George family has said that all it wants is the truth; the truth about Ipperwash, the truth as to why something went terribly awry despite the OPP's long history of dealing with these situations peacefully and successfully. They want the truth about the government's hard-line approach. They want answers to some very important questions: What really happened at Ipperwash? Was the Premier directly involved? Were members of the cabinet directly involved? Were any members of the government directly involved? Was any political direction given to the OPP? The truth about Ipperwash: that's all the member for Scarborough-Agincourt wants; that is all this motion would have us together seek; that is all the George family is asking for; and that surely, at the end of the day, is what they deserve.

I am proud to lend my support to this motion, and I know that my Liberal colleagues will join me in our support for the work done by the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, but most importantly for the

work done by and still being done this very day by the Dudley George family.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Further debate?

There being no further debate, Mr Phillips has moved opposition day number 2. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1745 to 1755.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Members please take their seats.

All those in favour will rise one at a time until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario
Bartolucci, Rick	Curling, Alvin	McGuinty, Dalton
Bisson, Gilles	Di Cocco, Caroline	McLeod, Lyn
Bountrogianni, Marie	Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted
Boyer, Claudette	Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie
Bradley, James J.	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Bryant, Michael	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, David	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Christopherson, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramsay, David
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Smitherman, George
Conway, Sean G.	Levac, David	

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time until their name is called.

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Snobelen, John
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Dunlop, Garfield	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Mazzilli, Frank	Tilson, David
Elliott, Brenda	Miller, Norm	Tsubouchi, David H.
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.	Turnbull, David
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gill, Raminder	Murdoch, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hastings, John	Newman, Dan	Young, David
Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 35; the nays are 47.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock this evening.

*The House adjourned at 1758.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

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No. 15B

Nº 15B

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario  
Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario  
Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Monday 14 May 2001

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Lundi 14 mai 2001

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 14 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 14 mai 2001

*The House met at 1845.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PUBLIC SERVICE STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA FONCTION PUBLIQUE

Mr Wettlaufer, on behalf of Mr Tsubouchi, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 25, An Act to amend the Public Service Act and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, 1993 / Projet de loi 25, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la fonction publique et la Loi de 1993 sur la négociation collective des employés de la Couronne.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** I will be sharing my time with the member from Simcoe North and the member from Peterborough.

On April 30, 2001, Minister Tsubouchi introduced amendments to the Public Service Act. It's been more than 40 years since this act's last substantial update. The legislation dates back more than 122 years, and parts of it no longer meet current and future business challenges.

As the main legislative framework for human resource management in the Ontario public service, the act sets out the authority for activities in areas such as recruitment, conditions of employment and rules of conduct. It governs the employment of all civil servants, unclassified public servants and crown employees designated under the act.

We are taking action to substantially update the act and to make sure this legislation supports what taxpayers expect from their government: greater accountability and better services.

The limited number of legislative changes we're proposing here will help the public service deliver the top-notch services that the people of Ontario demand. The changes will provide more efficiency and flexibility and ensure we have a workforce that can respond to changing business needs.

Accountability, efficiency and democracy are the cornerstones of these legislative amendments. We cannot meet the needs of the people of Ontario if we are not flexible enough to adapt to their changing needs. We cannot be efficient if we do not modernize employment

and recruitment policies. We cannot be democratic if we do not give people a choice.

As you know, the Ontario public service is experiencing challenges in attracting and recruiting the talented and skilled people we need for time-limited, project-based work. This issue is particularly acute in executive recruitment in specialized areas such as information technology. We have an obligation to recruit and retain the best employees possible to deliver our programs and services. At the same time, we need to have a flexible workforce to support time-limited initiatives. New provisions in the bill will help us do that. They include increasing initial appointments to the unclassified public service up to a maximum of three years before renewal is required. Current provisions limit initial appointments to the unclassified public service to one year.

#### 1850

What will this do? Increasing the initial term of appointment will make the public service a more attractive workplace to external workers, and it will help us retain the skills necessary to deliver the services that the public needs and deserves. Any private employer would have this built into its human resource policies in order to provide better service to its clients. The government should do no less for all Ontarians.

New provisions also include creating a category of term classified employees. Ministries will be able to hire these employees in exceptional circumstances where highly specialized skills are needed for time-limited project work. Term classified employees may be appointed for up to three years, with the opportunity to renew for an additional period of time. This will allow ministries to recruit individuals with the required skills and to make offers for temporary positions more attractive.

Hiring employees for specific terms is an example of how we can remain committed to meeting the needs of taxpayers. By removing unnecessary layers of bureaucracy, we can focus on delivering our services to the public. Part of the legislative updates to make the Ontario public service more efficient includes providing greater flexibility to civil servants' reporting relationships while at the same time remaining accountable to the taxpayers who foot their bills.

This includes situations in which deputy ministers will be allowed, subject to the approval of the Civil Service Commission, to delegate their authority under the Public Service Act to non-public servants. Currently, a deputy minister may only delegate his or her authority to a public servant in his or her ministry. This limitation was

identified as a barrier to cross-ministry initiatives and partnerships with other governments and the private sector.

I want to be clear. Allowing greater delegation of a deputy minister's authority does not mean we are reneging on our commitment to be accountable to taxpayers. We may be delegating authority, but our government is still ultimately responsible for the quality of services it delivers. In fact, the new provisions in this bill will allow public servants to be managed more effectively when working in these partnership arrangements.

As you know, Mr Speaker, our government has been exploring, and continues to explore, partnerships with the broader public service or the private sector to provide better service to the people of Ontario and to make sure we are using tax dollars appropriately.

With the creation of SuperBuild, Ontario signalled its intention to increase its use of public-private partnerships and to provide the best value for Ontario taxpayers. But the government can only review its services and assets and allow for public-private partnerships if it has the flexibility to delegate authority.

At the same time, we need to establish open, fair and transparent processes to ensure that the public's interest is protected, and that's exactly what changes in the Public Service Act allow us to do.

These changes also include providing workplace democracy for Ontario Provincial Police civilian employees. By amending the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act and the Public Service Act, civilian employees of the Ontario Provincial Police will be able to choose, on a one-time-only basis, whether to continue to be represented by their current bargaining agent or by the Ontario Provincial Police Association.

There will be members across who might ask why we would do this. Hundreds of these employees have expressed their wish to join the OPPA, the Ontario Provincial Police Association. This would allow them to be in the same situation as their municipal police sector counterparts. Under the Police Services Act, civilian employees at municipal forces are represented by their respective municipal police associations.

Legislative amendments to the Public Service Act will provide OPP civilian employees with a democratic choice. It is a matter of fairness and openness. It's a matter of fairness and openness in the workplace that employees have the right to be able to choose their bargaining agent, the bargaining agent that would best represent their needs.

If sufficient support is demonstrated, civilian employees will take part in a secret ballot vote under the supervision of the Ontario Labour Relations Board. If the civilian employees vote in favour of joining the Ontario Provincial Police Association, they will be placed in a separate bargaining unit under the Public Service Act and will be represented by the OPPA.

This is an updating of the Public Service Act, not a complete overhaul of the legislation. Management Board Secretariat consulted with ministries and bargaining

agents last year on a number of items that were identified as needing an update.

Updating the Public Service Act removes the barriers that hinder the government in adopting the dynamic needs of the people of Ontario. It enables us to move with the times and establish practices that reflect those commonly used in modern workplaces.

The changes I am proposing will help the public service, the OPS, to continue to provide the quality service the public has come to expect and which we have promised to deliver.

As I mentioned earlier, these are things that would have been included automatically in an employer's human resources department in the private sector. Why this has not been done previously is beyond me, but nevertheless, it hasn't. These changes are badly needed and I hope that everyone will support them.

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak this evening on Bill 25, An Act to amend the Public Service Act and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, 1993.

To begin with, I would like to thank the PA, Mr Wettlaufer, for his comments. I'd also like to congratulate Minister Tsubouchi for bringing forth this legislation, which I believe has not had any substantial amendments for over 40 years.

When Minister Tsubouchi introduced this act on April 30, a number of amendments were necessary to bring the legislation into the 21st century. I'd like to speak for a few moments on the background and some of the reasons for amending this act.

First of all, one might ask, why are we reviewing the Public Service Act at all? The legislation, parts of which date back more than 122 years, needs to be updated to meet current and future business challenges as we bring greater accountability and improved customer service to the taxpayers of our province.

As the main legislative framework for human resource management in the Ontario public service, the Public Service Act sets out the authority for activities in areas such as recruitment, conditions of employment and rules of conduct. We are looking at what changes need to be made to help us meet our goal of a multi-skilled, flexible workforce.

#### 1900

Management Board Secretariat has consulted with ministries and bargaining agents on a number of items that have been identified as needing an update. We are continuing to review those items and seek further input from our stakeholders.

Proposed amendments to the Public Service Act include provisions that will, first of all, permit wider delegation of deputy minister's powers to create opportunities for more efficient and effective service deliveries to the public. It will create a category of "term classified" employees who may be appointed for up to three years.

Generally, the act will have some very significant changes. The Public Service Act is the principle legislative framework for human resource management in the

Ontario Public Service. It governs the employment of all civil servants, unclassified public servants, and crown employees designated under this act.

Other proposed amendments to the Public Service Act will require the Public Service Grievance Board and the Grievance Settlement Board to accept a conviction under the Criminal Code respecting an act that results in discipline or dismissal as conclusive evidence that the person whose grievance the board is considering committed the act that gave rise to the discipline or dismissal.

It will also prohibit the Public Service Grievance Board from reinstating an employee to a position involving direct contact with residents or clients where the employee has sexually molested a resident or a client.

It will allow appointments to the unclassified service for a maximum of three years before renewal is required.

It will provide the opportunity for workplace democracy for Ontario Provincial Police civilian employees.

It will clarify political activity rights for crown counsel 5s.

It will clarify the government's intent regarding the collection, use and disclosure of information for the delivery of integrated human resource management services.

In the private sector, similar provisions would be found in employment contracts or in an employer's human resource policies.

The act establishes the Civil Service Commission. It delineates its functions for administering the act in such areas as recommending salary ranges for positions not covered by a collective agreement and the process for staff recruitment.

The act also provides for the delegation of employer responsibilities within the Ontario Public Service. It identifies political activity rights of crown employees and provides a framework for labour relations for the Ontario Provincial Police.

The act has accompanying regulations that provide details on implementation of the act in such areas as employee benefits, conditions of employment, and rules of conduct for public servants in conflict-of-interest situations. That can, of course, be very difficult in many positions in government.

These regulations primarily apply to management and excluded employees, as the provisions of a collective agreement supersede the regulations.

The act is being reviewed because revisions are needed to help improve the delivery of efficient and effective service to the public. For example, improvements are needed to broaden human resource management authorities to allow the greater integration of work between ministries and agencies as well as other partners.

Management Board Secretariat has consulted with ministries and bargaining agents on a limited number of issues that have been identified as needing attention.

The foundation for change, I believe, is based on two cornerstones of our government: accountability and efficiency. I think we've heard over and over again about

these two cornerstones, particularly in the throne speech and again last week in the budget. I'm very proud to be part of a government that uses that type of cornerstone as the future for a government.

Accountability is what good government is all about. Reviewing the Public Service Act, which is more than 120 years old and does not support the demands of today's evolving business needs, is part of our government's commitment to be more accountable to the needs of the taxpayers, not only today but certainly well into the future. No substantive changes have been made to this act in 40 years. Our government is taking action to correct this situation and to make sure our workforce is in a position to deliver quality service that the public expects and deserves. We've used that phrase over and over again here in Ontario because our taxpayers do expect and deserve no less.

This is only part of a broader series of measures the government has taken and will continue to take to bring accountability for the taxpayer dollars that are spent on public programs every day. As you see in the budget, we're now spending a little over \$63 billion a year to provide those services to the taxpayers of our province.

Changes in the Public Service Act will help make government programs more accountable to the people of Ontario by giving it the flexibility required to reduce the waste and inefficiency involved in administering government programs. It will allow for more flexible and dynamic working arrangements to address the needs of taxpayers which are not adequately addressed through single ministries. Delegating some deputy ministerial authority will help the civil service streamline its operations while keeping all parties involved accountable to the government and to the people of Ontario—and we use the word "accountable" again.

It is important to note that there is a difference between delegation of authority and delegation of our responsibility. All people who are affected by this will be accountable to the deputy minister, the government and the people of Ontario.

This act, if passed, would allow deputy ministers to delegate authority, providing for more flexibility in reporting lines. For example, the Deputy Minister of Health and Long-term Care would be able to delegate to a manager in the Ministry of Colleges, Training and Universities supervision authority of some employees who are working collaboratively on a project to increase the number of medical school graduates. Of course, we all want to see many more medical school graduates, particularly in some parts of the province that are underserviced. My area happens to be one of those.

Under the current legislation, this would not be possible. Deputy ministers can delegate authority to managers within their own ministry but not externally. With challenges that require solutions involving more than one ministry, the current act makes it necessary to have several reporting lines when only one is actually necessary. This creates an unnecessary level of bureau-

cracy—more unneeded expenses without any value added to our taxpayers.

This is not good value for the money, and with scarce resources—one would think that with \$63 billion of expenditures and the revenues we have, there wouldn't be scarce resources—we know it is necessary to do more with less. I think people right across our province and right across our country have seen this happen, just as families have been doing for years. This is being accountable for the precious resources we deal with. After all, the government does not have any money of its own. It all belongs to our taxpayers. All the money we have belongs to our taxpayers, and they expect us to be accountable for that money.

The value added in this portion of the legislation provides for a more efficient and effective public service that is more responsive to the needs of the community. It will allow the government and the public service to approach challenges in the innovative and creative fashion that people want. Taxpayers don't care about bureaucratic hurdles. They want results and value for their hard-earned dollars. We are going to provide that with this legislation.

1910

*Interjection.*

**Mr Dunlop:** I want a glass of water, yes. I'm really dry and I have a cold. Thank you. It is very quiet in here tonight, so maybe we should have a little more activity.

These changes are not only part of a wider approach by this government to bring more accountability to the taxpayers' dollars being spent on public programs every day; it is being accountable by delivering programs that adapt to the changing needs of Ontarians and taking innovative approaches to the challenges and pressures of delivering top-notch services in the light of increasing fiscal pressures.

I would like to comment as well a little bit on efficiency in the government and efficiency in the private sector and efficiency that we have to deal with in our homes every day. Efficiency, effectiveness and reliability are the cornerstones of an excellent public service. I've noticed that in my years in municipal politics, when mistakes were made and people would ask us to become more efficient in the operations of our different departments. Proposed amendments to the Public Service Act and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act focus on how to help the Ontario public service deliver services the taxpayers of this province expect and deserve.

Real people and families all across this province are facing pressure on their finances. They look for ways to get more for less. If they can spend less and get more, then they should do it. Government should be no different. In fact, it must be exactly the same, because government does not have its own money to spend. I'm saying that again: it only spends the money of taxpayers, and we must always try to be more efficient and we must all strive to deliver valuable services which give taxpayers the greatest value for their dollars.

One challenge to achieving greater efficiency is attracting and retaining people in the public sector who can deliver high-quality programs. These people often need to have specialized expertise which is in scarce supply and high demand. If we are to deliver on taxpayer expectations, we need to be able to attract and retain top talent that can make things happen.

I'm honoured to say that my riding of Simcoe North is home to the general headquarters of the Ontario Provincial Police. The headquarters are actually called the Lincoln Alexander Building, named after our former Lieutenant Governor. A lot of credit can be given to our former NDP government, which did in fact want to locate some of the buildings out of the GTA. I'm very pleased to have that facility there. The economic benefits have been phenomenal because of the fact that the officers and the staff who work at the general headquarters spend money in all parts of the community. They build homes, they buy cars, and they're very, very active in the community, in volunteer organizations and service clubs etc. It is a pleasure to have them there. The employees, as you know, are represented by either the OPPA or OPSEU. The location of the OPP in Orillia has been a very important industry to our region.

I just want to say a couple of things while I'm discussing the OPPA; I want to talk about some of the other centres that report directly to the government.

Of course, one of them would be the Huronia Regional Centre across the road from the headquarters, a home for over 700 employees, most of them belonging to OPSEU. They look after a number of developmentally challenged people in one of the major centres in the province.

Casino Rama, of course, reports to the Ontario gaming commission. It has been a remarkable facility, creating almost 3,000 jobs. Currently, we're putting in a new 5,000-seat entertainment centre. We're putting in a 300-room hotel. We're also home to the Penetanguishene Mental Health Centre. I think there's a little over 400 employees at the mental health centre. All these people belong to different organizations. More recently, just a week ago, it was announced that Management and Training Corp would be looking after the Central North Correctional Centre, which is a 1,200-bed provincial facility for corrections for people serving two years less a day.

In all these organizations that report to the government, the employees contribute to the community and they have a great economic benefit, but as well they have an important benefit in the fact that they are good people and are connected to the community.

I'd like to say a little bit about the OPP civilians, because certainly this is an important issue in my riding with the headquarters there. That's why I want to bring it up. Under the current Public Service Act, 2,500 people across the province are prevented from using their democratic right to choose the bargaining unit which they feel best represents their interests. Civilian employees of the Ontario Provincial Police, who perform duties such as administration, forensic sciences and other important

roles in police business, are barred from joining the Ontario Provincial Police Association as it stands right now. The situation is out of sync with municipal police forces in the province, whose civilian employees are represented by the local police association. Locally we do have two police associations, the Barrie Police Association and the Midland Police Association, whose civilian employees belong to the local bargaining unit along with the police officers.

Of course, we can go one step further on that and show the importance of police associations and the fact that the officers belonging to the Toronto Police Services Board belong to the same collective bargaining unit as the civilian officers.

We believe democratic choice is imperative, and that's one of the main reasons behind Bill 25. I'm pleased to see that here today. We actually have received hundreds of letters from civilian employees of the Ontario Provincial Police who want the choice to decide on the bargaining unit that best represents them.

Just on the weekend a young lady came up to me and asked me how this bill was coming along. She was wanting the chance to have the choice between the two bargaining units. As it stands, the legislation does not allow for these employees to be part of the Ontario Provincial Police Association. This amendment that's part of Bill 25 will allow these employees to have the democratic choice of which bargaining unit best represents them.

The choice rests with the employees. This is not a government decision, and that's very, very important. They do have that choice. Each member is free to vote their conscience. Should they feel that the current union does not properly represent their interests, they may choose to join the OPPA.

No organization should be able to treat their members as their exclusive domain without having to compete and prove they are worthy of their members' loyalty. To have legislation which in effect prevents a group of people from choosing an organization which best represents their interests is certainly undemocratic.

We are not the only ones saying that a group of workers should be able to join their own union. Even our friend, Mr Buzz Hargrove, president of the CAW, thinks the competition among unions is healthy for the labour movement. The president of the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees also thinks that competition between bargaining units is healthy and feels that it is counterproductive to the union's own best interests to prevent competition between the units.

This process will be fair, transparent and democratic. Each union will vote separately. Members of one union will not have a say about the fate of another. The OPPA will have to prove to the Ontario Labour Relations Board that they have adequate support to warrant a vote to certify their new members.

Just as in the Labour Relations Act, certification will only take place when more than 50% of votes cast are in favour of joining, in this case, the OPPA if OPSEU members decide to go that way.

I'm pleased that I've had the opportunity to speak here this evening. Bill 25 is long overdue. I plan to support this bill, and I look forward over the next two hours and 10 minutes to hearing comments from my other colleagues as well as members of the opposition. I'm sure there will be many interesting comments. I appreciate the opportunity to have had the chance to say a few words tonight.

1920

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** It's interesting when you're in third place to speak on a particular subject. We'd be real wise to say, "Ditto," and sit down. I figured that would happen, but unfortunately we—

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** He and I have spent a lifetime of doing that.

**Mr Stewart:** That's right. We human beings and so-called politicians maybe just don't like to do that, because you don't get a lot of mileage for it and you're not able to express your opinion on the particular subjects you're talking about.

Certainly, I am very pleased to be able to speak to Bill 25, the Public Service Statute Law Amendment Act, 2001. I want to talk a little bit about efficiency, which this particular act addresses. Certainly my background for the last many, many years in business has been looking at efficiencies within, to make sure that the people we serve, who in our particular case are the taxpayers, are being well served.

If you look at some of the amendments to this particular act, it basically goes into four different categories: number one being greater flexibility in administrative efficiencies in the OPS human resource management; number two is opportunity for workplace democracy for Ontario Provincial Police civilian employees; number three, clarifying the political activity rights and restrictions of some employees; and, finally, clarifying the government's intent regarding the collection, use and disclosure of information for the delivery of integrated human resource services.

As the member for Kitchener Centre in his address suggested, this act has not been changed or revisited or updated—whichever way you wish to put it—in 40-some-odd years, and certainly it's an act that goes back 120 years. I would suggest to anybody in this House that a change or two, or to revisit this act, is long overdue.

Certainly I wasn't around 122 years ago. I don't know, maybe Rick might have been around here that long.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Stewart:** Sorry, the member for Sudbury. My apologies.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** It feels like it tonight, Gary.

**Mr Stewart:** He may have been, but certainly both of us agree that change is inevitable. It's long overdue.

If you look at the speech from the throne, it had three main focuses: one being accountability, one being fiscal responsibility and the other being growth. Certainly the first two are very appropriate to this particular act, being accountability and fiscal responsibility. I think they are

extremely important and refer very much to this particular act.

Certainly there are those, possibly in this House, who don't believe in efficiency. I think our government has been extremely aware of that. We have been moving toward that, looking at every aspect to make sure that efficiency, effectiveness and reliability are the cornerstones of our government. They have to be of excellent public service if we want to make sure that the services we are delivering for the taxpayer in this province are services that are efficient, effective and reliable. That, to me, is a pretty good start on any type of legislation.

Real people and families across this province are facing pressures in their own finances, and we know that. They look for ways to get more for less, and if they can spend less and get more, they do it. I think if that's the philosophy of the people of this province, and indeed it is, then it should be the philosophy of the government. I appreciate that some governments have not done that in the past, have not revisited this type of legislation, but if I had my way, every piece of legislation that goes through this House would have a sunset clause in it. I can't for the life of me figure out why we pass legislation that is going to go on for ever and ever. I certainly didn't come to this House today in a horse and buggy. I came in a fairly modern vehicle. It's called change, and we've got to be ready for it. We've got to revisit it to make sure it is effective and efficient and relates to the times we are in now.

I don't believe government should be any different. I know our government isn't when we looked at passing the budget bill where we could no longer budget a deficit, which we are now trying to do. In the public sector as well we should not be any different. In fact, it must be exactly the same for government as it is for the people, because the money that people pay is what we use. That's all we do: we use the money they pay us to put into other priorities, whether it be education, health, social assistance, whatever. We must always strive to be more efficient and to deliver valuable services which give taxpayers the greatest value for their dollar, and we have to be cognizant of that.

Again, we have to make sure that is followed up by customer service. It's something that in a lot of levels of government, whether it be federal, provincial or municipal, we tend to forget, that we're just using the money that the people give us to pass on to allow us to deliver the services we want to.

One challenge that's addressed in this particular legislation is to achieve greater efficiency in attracting and retaining people in the public sector who can deliver high-quality programs. It's called knowledge, professionalism and skills. If we want to make what we do up here efficient, effective and accountable, we have to have the best possible people available to be part of that process, to be part of the team we have at Queen's Park. We must make sure that those people we hire and employ have the best possible skills available. Again, we need that type of expertise to handle the funding, to handle the

various things we're involved with, because the taxpayer, I believe, demands it.

Those people often need to have specialized expertise which, when business and the economy are booming, as they are now, is sometimes somewhat scarce. To get the best people, it tends to make us look longer. I often think that if the economy wasn't as great as it is, we would have the availability of more professional and knowledgeable people. But let me assure you, I don't want this economy to change from what it has been in the last five years just for the sake of being able to find an extra couple of people with that very important specialized expertise, because we can certainly train them. But when supply is scarce and demand is high, it is more difficult, and we must make sure we hire the very best: the best qualified, those with the most knowledge. The bottom line of it is, we've got to make sure we get them at the best possible price, albeit to get quality you sometimes have to pay extra.

### 1930

If we are to deliver on taxpayer expectations, we need to be able to attract and retain—and possibly the one word there is "retain"—top talent that can make things happen. There are a lot of people in this House tonight who have been in business, and if you want to make things happen in business, you have to make sure you have the best possible team available; otherwise it's just not going to happen. The current Public Service Act makes it difficult for the public service to attract that type of talent, especially at the executive level and in high-tech areas. These legislative changes that are involved in this act will allow us to make more attractive job offers to new workers with specialized skills, and those are specialized skills that we need. I believe we have to treat people on an individual basis. Again, when you're hiring them, as we do anywhere else, it's based on knowledge, merit and, above all, ability, which is so very important.

Updates to the act include increasing initial appointments to the unclassified service up to a maximum of three years before they need to renew. Again, consistency and quality of the employees is so important, because if you get somebody who has the knowledge, has the skills, has the ability, I would suggest to you that these days you want to make sure you keep them; they are a valued asset. I often think that we all don't appreciate the employees we have quite as much as we should.

The bill also creates a category of term classified employees. This will help ministries recruit workers with highly specialized skills for one-time limited project work. Again, you want qualified, skilled people for a certain term, and if that can go on for a three-year period, then take a look at them, see if you still need that type of expertise, and you can renew it.

The other one is that these employees may have an opportunity to renew their contracts after three years where appropriate. There again, you look at them, assess them, and make sure they meet the qualifications and have the ability and the skills to do the job. If not, then I would suggest you would not renew those contracts. You

have that ability there again to make sure the quality of employee we have is just the very best.

I just want to make one comment. The member from Simcoe North made the comment that he had talked this past week to a number of people who worked at the local OPP detachment in the centre in Orillia. I also had the opportunity on Saturday night to attend a retirement of an OPP officer who had been with the OPP in Thessalon and Peterborough for 32 years. His name is Sergeant Dennis Thompson, and I want to make one comment which will lead up to what I'm going to say.

Dennis Thompson unfortunately had a very major accident back 10 years ago. Actually, it was 10 years to the day on Saturday night. Dennis was shot in the face, and after 44 years he was instantly blinded. But through perseverance and being the role model that Dennis is, after four months he went back to the OPP, totally blind, and continued to work there for 10 years until his retirement on January 1. I want to compliment Dennis in this House, a fellow who had the perseverance, the foresight, the ability and the attitude to make it happen. It was interesting to meet his family, who have worked with him, and the OPP officers in the detachment who have worked with him to make that happen.

During the particular evening the other night, I had the opportunity to talk to two or three of the staff who work out at the OPP detachment, and they want to be part of the OPPA. I am a great believer in the democratic process, that if you want to do something, you should have the ability to make choices.

It was interesting, this afternoon we talked about parental choice in education and schooling for your children. I believe that democratic choice is imperative in this day and age. I believe that the people who are working for the OPP, the civilian staff, should have that right—and they will have that right if this goes through—to make the choice of whether they stay with OPSEU or they become part of the OPPA.

What I am saying is, if you work in an organization, if you're part of an organization, why then would you not be able to have that choice? This choice should and will rest with the employees. This will not be a government decision. Each member is free to vote for their conscience. Isn't that what democracy is all about? I believe it is. Should they feel that their current union does not properly represent their interests, or if they feel that they do, they should have the right to make the choice of whether they stay with the union they're with or join the OPPA. The funny part of it is, that's the bottom line of this whole piece of legislation. The bottom line is to allow people to have some authority over what their destination should be.

I believe the process will be fair, it will be transparent, and it will be democratic. As I understand it, each union will vote separately. Members of one union will not have a say about the fate of the other. The OPPA will have to prove to the Ontario Labour Relations Board that they have adequate support to warrant a vote to certify their new members.

I think it's an act that drips of democracy. It's an act that drips of efficiency. It's an act that represents accountability. It's an act that I believe is long, long overdue.

It has been my pleasure to speak to it. I would hope that the opposition members would give consideration to support this, again, because you're talking about human beings who want a choice. I don't believe that we as legislators should force anybody to belong to this union or that association or whatever. I believe that if I am working for an organization, I have that right to decide for myself which way I would like to go. I believe that these people should have that right as well.

It has been my pleasure to speak to this act. As I said, I would hope that the opposition members would support this. As the member for Simcoe North suggested, even some of the heads of the various unions are extremely supportive of allowing people to make choices, and that's what this is all about. I believe the people there should have that right and not be pushed or directed by us in this House or us in this Legislature.

It's been a pleasure talking on Bill 25.

#### 1940

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments and questions?

**Mr Bartolucci:** I'm happy to have the privilege to respond to the members for Kitchener Centre, Simcoe North and Peterborough in the initial discussion on Bill 25.

Certainly, I have some rather major concerns with the legislation because I believe it further erodes the public service, it further reduces accountability, and it certainly centralizes decision-making more. I don't know if that's always in the best interests of Ontarians.

I think the people of Ontario should understand that. This legislation allows a deputy minister to delegate his or her powers to hire, fire, promote, transfer or discipline an employee to another deputy minister in any other ministry, or to any designated private sector person.

We've all experienced centralization, that form of government for which Mike Harris has been famous since 1995 and we know that it is not in the best interests of Ontarians. I would suggest to you that this section which allows the deputy minister to transfer his or her power clearly is a sign of the growing desire by this government for the privatization of the public service.

I see the privatization of the public service as something that will promote less accountability as opposed to more accountability. We see that with the privatization of a public service, what you get sometimes is inferior to what you already have. I believe there are examples of this already in Ontario and that's why I am going to have difficulty in supporting Bill 25.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** Usually I feel compelled to let viewers know that it's around a quarter to 8 on a Monday night and this isn't a rerun, but after the three government speakers, I'm convinced there are no more viewers. Anybody who was watching has long

gone to the shopping channel or to Emeril on the Food Network.

The government members present this in the most painfully leisurely way, to suggest that somehow, oh, it's just change that's long overdue. I tell you, it's change all right, but it's change that is to be expected and it's change that's to be resisted, and it's change that's to be fought tooth and nail, certainly by New Democrats and by fair-minded people across this province who care about a public service that is independent, that is neutral in its approach, that is non-partisan, that cares about the sort of services that public sector workers have been providing—you want to talk about 120 years? Yes, I dare say for probably darned near 120 years.

The bill is a mini-omnibus bill; let's get that very clear. It attacks a whole lot of areas all at once and the government members are going to try to have us believe that it's just a benign little change in things to meet the year 2001.

Far from benign, this is paving the way for the ongoing privatization of Ontario's public sector by what are inevitably going to be—I'm sorry, my friend, you take great pride in the private sector operators, the corporate, for-profit operators of the mega-jail in Penetanguishene. Why don't you remind your constituents that not only is it the private sector running jails for profits, but those profits paid for with public tax dollars aren't even going to stay in the province of Ontario? They're going to flow down to the United States, where the home company is based. You're selling off this province to American corporate people and this bill helps you do it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Dunlop:** Thank you very much—

**The Acting Speaker:** No, you can't speak on it and ask questions and have comments about it.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** I just want to congratulate the three speakers from this side of the House, who I think really captured the intent and the spirit of the bill.

I know that some members opposite were not as interested in hearing a reasoned, logical argument about why this bill should be passed, because they have their pet political peeves, which we're going to hear about in the next little while.

But I do want to congratulate each and every member on their putting forward what I believe was a cogent argument why all members of this Legislature should support this important piece of legislation.

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** I think Bill 25 is based exactly on that. Our own minister says we cannot base our discussion on reasons and other issues with respect to Bill 25. That is exactly the point: it has to be based on good reasons in order to be supported.

I'm sure that from time to time every member of the House gets asked by his own constituents, "If the government is doing this and that behind closed doors and it is no good for us, why don't you do something, why don't you stop the government?" We say, "We keep bringing it to the attention of the government that Bill 25

does not do what they say it is going to do. It deals with morale, it deals with jobs, it deals with the human aspect, with employee equity and stuff like that." They say, "Why don't you do something about it?" It's very hard to make those people understand that ultimately the government has the final say and, right or wrong, they will go on and do exactly what they shouldn't do.

But we in this House are saying, "You are dealing with very serious issues here. It's not an innocuous bill. You're dealing with privacy of information. You're dealing with how this will affect our employees." It's fine to say, "Look, we are dealing with the skills of our employees; we teach them and we provide this and we provide that," and then we don't treat them like good employees. That is why they are leaving Ontario and going down to the States.

It is a very important piece of legislation, and I hope the government understands that we want decisions made here in this chamber and not behind closed doors—the Premier to the minister, to the sub-minister, to the deputy, to somebody else down the line, and nobody knows what the heck they're going to do about it.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Kitchener Centre has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** I'd like to thank the members from Sudbury, Niagara Centre, Lanark-Carleton and York West for their input. It's beyond me, however, how they can throw so much fear into a piece of legislation that is so uncontroversial. We're not talking about rocket science here. We're talking about a situation that the private sector has done for years. It just enables the government to provide service that the public needs, that the public wants, at a reasonable cost. We're not talking about privatization of the public service. We're talking about the ability of the government to recruit qualified people from the outside for time-limited, job-specific appointments. This is not major. This is not something revolutionary. This is something that in a good business sense, to meet the needs of the Ontario public, makes absolute sense. I wish the members of the opposition wouldn't oppose it just for the purpose of opposing it, but would think about it and realize that it meets the needs of the Ontario public.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** It's a pleasure for me as the Liberal critic for Management Board to lead off our part in the debate on Bill 25, An Act to amend the Public Service Act and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, 1993.

The member from Kitchener Centre would have us believe, and has just summarized in a way, that this act isn't anything to be much concerned about. During debate, I think the member opposite said there are a limited number of changes and it's not a complete overhaul. But, believe me, Speaker and members here tonight, as we progress through debate of this bill you will see there are in fact major changes and that this is not just an insignificant bill. I'm surprised, as a matter of

fact, that the government would play down the importance of this bill in their debate this evening.

**1950**

But as we go through the debate and others of my colleagues debate this bill, we'll be covering areas that will lead, in our view, to an increase in the number of contract workers employed by the Ontario public service. This is done through the introduction of term classified and three-year term unclassified categories. We're going to be debating issues that allow the deputy minister to delegate his or her powers to fire, hire, promote, transfer or discipline to another deputy minister in any other ministry, for reasons that are in fact beyond me, or, more importantly, and my remarks will be more or less directed to this issue this evening, to any designated person or persons. Put in brackets on that, "privatization."

This bill, as has been mentioned by government members, gives the OPPA or the OPSEU members who are in the administrative area of the Ontario Provincial Police the choice to join with the OPPA. This bill limits the type of employment that can be given by the grievance board of the Ontario public service to employees convicted of using force or sexual molestation on a resident or client, a very important part of the bill. This bill will allow the public service to privatize the collection of personal information for human resources purposes. This, in our view, allows the public servant's private information to get into the hands of that person or those persons, ie, privatization.

Now, previously, the government has opened the door to privatization. We merely remind ourselves of private universities that can now exist, private jails that can now exist and—the big one—Ontario Hydro. But this bill, in our view, kicks the door wide open and invites the private sector in.

Section 5, for example, of the legislation changes the current section 23 of the act to give the deputy minister the power to delegate any of his or her powers to another person or persons. I read from the bill:

**"Delegation of powers, deputy minister**

"With the consent of his or her minister, a deputy minister may delegate in writing any of his or her powers under this act to a public servant, a class of public servant or, with the commission's approval, to" any other "person or persons," ie, the private sector.

**"Delegation of duties, deputy minister**

"With the consent of his or her minister, a deputy minister may delegate any of his or her duties under this act to a public servant, a class of public servant or, with the commission's approval, to another person or persons."

Under this act, the delegation of authorization: "The powers and duties referred to," that I just referred to, "in subsections (1) and (2) include an authorization given in a regulation to establish rules or requirements." I'll deal with those a little later in my remarks.

But I want to point out, when it mentions the Ontario Civil Service Commission, those at home may think,

"There's a safeguard. The Ontario Civil Service Commission will look after things for us." But we should understand that the Ontario Civil Service Commission is made up of three permanent members, who are the secretary of cabinet, the secretary of Management Board, who is the chair of the Civil Service Commission, and the associate secretary of cabinet. Other deputy ministers will be appointed to the role of commissioner for one-year terms, which may be renewed. So the Ontario Civil Service Commission is really made up mainly of those bureaucrats who, we just said, can delegate their authority to anybody, including those in the private sector. What this does is move part of government away from public scrutiny and into the back room. Regulations, as they stand today, under current regulations, must be printed in the Gazette. However, the regulations that I just referred to won't have to be. They may hide these rules or requirements, as it says, from the public or even from a third party who requests, through freedom of information, the interests or arguments and the information that goes behind them.

Let me deal with the privatization of the public sector and why I think this is bad. I'm going to emphasize again that it allows a deputy minister to delegate his or her powers to fire, hire, promote, transfer or discipline to another deputy minister in any other ministry or to any other person or persons in the private sector. This allows further privatization of the public service. A deputy minister, for example, could delegate his or her authority for jails, environmental protection or public safety issues to a private company whose only interest is profit. We've seen that happen already when it comes to jails, and the privatization of universities and Ontario Hydro. This actually reduces accountability, since it blurs the lines of responsibility. This will prevent any public servant, or many public servants, from knowing what deputy minister is responsible for their actions, because their deputy minister may have delegated that responsibility to someone else.

I think it's interesting, and we should know some of the history of the public service. How did the public service come about? Why do we have a public service? I think the history that goes into this is very interesting.

I'm going to quote from a number of sources, not the least of which is Lloyd Brown-John, who actually happens to be a constituent of mine, in a paper he wrote in 1990. It's headed up, "If you're so damned smart, why don't you run the government like a business?" I quote: "Politicians seeking to enhance their own profile are more inclined to contribute to the problem of improving public sector management than they are disposed toward contributing to a solution to the problem. The temptation for politicians to use the bureaucracy as a scapegoat is sometimes overwhelming."

There was a quote about the Mulroney government back in 1990: "The bottom line is that if the Conservatives want to receive credit for improved management and productivity in the public sector then they are going to have to examine the longer-term, less rewarding, haul.

Running government more like a business will not have a short-term high rate of return on current investment in innovation. To increase productivity requires constant reminders and pressure; results can be achieved over a long period of time. The Tories may not want to afford that luxury." I think that analogy applies here.

Jennifer McQueen, a former federal deputy minister, said in a paper on dialogue:

"In government, we face an incredible onus to be fair and equal in the way we treat our customers and the way we run our operations. Our management decisions must ... give all Canadians, regardless of the province, region, gender, or language, an equal shot at the benefits Canada has to offer. This can lead us to act in ways that business executives might find hard to swallow. For example:

"It means that many government departments keep offices in every province"—this can be applied provincially, I think, in every region of the province—"whether they need them or not.... The onus of fairness means departments have to provide services of comparable quality to citizens of Kingston and Baker Lake, regardless of the differential in cost." So here we're talking about a federal public service in an application, I think, that applies provincially as well.

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She went on to say, "It was this same appeal to fairness which got government into employment equity, affirmative action and equal pay for work of equal value long before the private sector. It's what comes from having to be government for all of the people in a country as large and diverse as Canada. And it affects not only the speed and quality of our operations, it also affects the cost."

There are differences between the public and private sectors. The achievement of businesslike efficiency in government is greatly affected and often hampered by the demands of the political environment. Departmental recommendations to cut public sector operating costs are sometimes incompatible with political priorities. According to Canada's Auditor General, "Private sector firms are not required, to the same extent as the public sector, to reconcile questions of productive management with concerns such as national unity, regional development and national well-being."

Politicians are concerned with winning public support. The public judges politicians by their public personae and policy initiatives, not by how well they manage their departments. Politicians want public servants who provide good policy advice and who keep them out of trouble.

The public sector has a greater emphasis on accountability. A major constraint on productive management "is the body of administrative regulations and the conflicting accountability requirements that limit managerial authority and autonomy." The lines of authority and responsibility tend to be much clearer in private sector organizations. In government, such factors as the scale and complexity of the operations, the desire for political

control of the bureaucracy and the search for consistency and coordination have resulted in a proliferation of accountability mechanisms that lengthen and complicate the decision-making process.

The human resource management system is more complicated and rigid in government than in the private sector. In general, it's harder both to hire and to fire government employees. In the public sector, the merit system of hiring and promoting employees includes several criteria that go well beyond the idea of mere technical proficiency; as an example, hiring a member of a minority group who is not as qualified as another candidate.

The complexity and inflexibility of human resources management systems also result from the general emphasis on accountability. The "public" nature—and I emphasize, the public nature—of public administration is conducted in a "fishbowl" of publicity, as stated by the Auditor General in 1976. Many government deliberations are conducted behind closed doors, but, compared to the private sector, many more government decisions are subjected to public scrutiny. Taxpayers insist on the right to know how much public money is being spent and for what purposes. Thus, a government decision to construct a new airport in a particular area will probably receive much more public and media examination than a decision by a major manufacturer to construct or close a plant in the same area, even if the latter decision has a greater economic or social impact on the community. The media will report the effects of such private sector decisions but they don't expect that these decisions should be made in public. An important consequence of this public scrutiny is greater emphasis in the public sector on such considerations as responsiveness and accountability. This emphasis explains in part the presence of what is popularly described as "bureaucratic red tape" and the consequent slowness in decision-making.

Clearly, governments are not oriented toward a single goal such as profit maximization. Rather, they typically must satisfy several goals simultaneously, some of which may conflict one with another and some which cannot even stand openly. In this complex environment it's not surprising that governments sometimes do things that would not stand the test of businesslike principles. It seems that the members opposite have a hard time not conflating fiscal accountability with government responsibility. They're not the same things. They're simply not the same things.

This government seems to think that its mandate is only to cut costs and save money while at the same time cutting taxes, particularly for the rich and for big business. Fiscal accountability is not accountability per se. It means nothing beyond the balance sheet, and as an accountant, I certainly understand how important the balance sheet is. But I also know that the balance sheet is not everything, particularly in government and particularly when you're trying to give the people you represent the best possible service. The best service is not neces-

sarily the most inexpensive. You know the old saying: you get what you pay for.

There are privatization fears out there: privatization of water and sewers, privatization of universities. Recently we've been talking about privatization in health care. We've gone through and are entering into the real experiment of privatization in jails and, of course, a great deal of debate has already gone on with regard to the privatization of Ontario Hydro.

Earlier I made mention of information that's available—or not available—when you have privatization. Where is a better example than in that of the breakup and privatization of Ontario Hydro, where the freedom of information act doesn't apply?

There are new classifications, as has been mentioned, in the public service under this legislation. According to Management Board numbers, 25% of the public service employees are currently on contract. This bill allows for greater use of contract personnel. As the debate goes on, my colleagues will talk more about the labour side of this issue, and I just wanted to make these points. The government's stated objective is to make it easier to attract specialists. I would argue that it would make it harder. Previously, the public service attracted people by offering security over high wages. The government's argument is that the increase from one to three years will increase security. It actually reduces security because it lessens the chance that they will get a permanent job.

This means that government will now have to pay more for employees. We know how much consultants cost and to me they're putting these employees in that area of being called consultants. With the competition out there for specialists, this could in fact be a significant amount.

Also, it takes away the professionalism and reliability of public servants. With uncertainty about their jobs, fewer will be willing to speak out. We see where this has led in Walkerton. Management consultants everywhere suggest employees be given the ability to speak up, to make government business more efficient. This government has decided to vilify the public service sector.

## 2010

The government of Canada's Discussion Paper on Values and Ethics in the Public Service says, "Public service is a special calling. It is not for everyone. Those who devote themselves to it find meaning and satisfaction that are not to be found elsewhere. But rewards are not necessarily material. They are moral and psychological," and, some would even suggest, at times spiritual. "They are the intangible rewards that proceed from the sense of devoting one's life to the service of the country," to the province, "to the affairs of state, to public purposes, great or small, and to the public good."

Ekos Research Associates say, on a paper on the perception of government service, "The greatest anger and alienation from government is directed to politicians and the entire institution of government. In fact, trust in federal [and provincial] public servants is significantly higher than the trust in politicians."

Two earlier studies, one in 1969 and one in 1978, demonstrated that despite favourable personal interactions with bureaucrats, many Canadians have a negative image of the bureaucracy as a whole. In the 1996 study, it was reported that members of the public "were more likely to describe specific transactions with federal public servants in more positive terms compared to their general negative impression of government service and public servants." I suggest that this can be applied to the provincial level of government as well.

Jocelyn Bourgon, Clerk of the Privy Council and secretary to the cabinet, said, to the Canadian Student Leadership Conference, "The public sector makes a significant difference to the performance of nations. [It] contributes to competitiveness, provides countries with a comparative advantage in their competition for trade and investment, and contributes to citizens' quality of life and standard of living."

I think we've all had experience with the public service, either as legislators or in the general public. I can think of one instance where a young man died, literally at the roadside in the province of Quebec. It happened to be the weekend of the St Jean Baptiste holiday. After the family had contacted me, I contacted the provincial coroner. Here was a case where a bureaucrat went to extreme lengths in order that this family could be satisfied in having their son brought back home. At first it looked as though this wouldn't happen for two or three days, because it was on a weekend and it was a holiday. But here we have a public servant who went to those lengths to contact the provincial government in Quebec and make the arrangements that were appropriate for this family.

My point here is not necessarily that the provincial coroner's office will be privatized, but that when you get into the private sector, I'm not sure I would have even been able to contact anybody that weekend.

To understand how we got where we are today, it's helpful to understand the evolution of the public service. I'll read in part from a paper called *The Changing Structure of the Ontario Government: Confederation to the Present*.

Our public service goes back to 1867. At that time, "the government of Ontario was an assorted collection of officials and offices carried over from the government of the ... United Province of Canada. Even the province's first Legislative Building, built in 1832 on Toronto's Front Street, was a leftover from an era gone by. After almost a century and a half, the government of Ontario has certainly changed. With 82,000 employees spread across 20 ministries and an annual budget now in excess of \$60 billion, it is now the largest provincial government in Canada.

"On July 1, 1867, the old United Province of Canada was displaced by the new Dominion of Canada, composed originally of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Union posed few administrative difficulties for the Maritime provinces: the machinery of government which had existed prior to 1867 simply

became the administrative basis for the new provincial governments." So as has been mentioned earlier this evening, we have had a public service for a long time.

"According to the BNA Act, the provinces were granted sole jurisdiction over the following areas: direct taxation; the management and sale of public lands; the establishment, maintenance and management of public and reformatory prisons; the establishment, maintenance and management of hospitals, asylums, and charitable institutions; municipalities; shop, saloon, tavern auctioneer and other regulatory licensing;"—and I'm sure that's been expanded now—"local works and undertakings; the incorporation of companies; the solemnization of marriage; property and civil rights; the administration of justice; generally all matters of merely a local and private nature." So the professional public service over this long period of time has in fact been involved in all of these areas. The development of the Ontario public service evolved directly from that federal system.

In Politics in Canada, Robert J. Jackson, a professor at the University of Ottawa, who happens to be an old friend of mine from high school days, wrote about the early history of the public service. The Civil Service Act of 1908 sought to replace patronage with the merit principle. I think these are some of the areas where it's important to think about what we are about to do with this legislation, if it passes, and if we are to hand over the delegation and operation of our public service to anyone other than the professional public service.

The act developed both an inside and an outside service. Again, as an example of the problem that can be created, the inside service, that which served in the capital, was tightly controlled, very professional and was long-serving for some of the reasons I gave before. It was the outside service, those who worked in the field, who weren't covered. What did we have? What was our history then? It was all political patronage. When governments changed, the outside public service changed. So we created a Civil Service Commission to enforce the merit principle in the recruitment and promotion of civil servants. Unfortunately, as I mentioned, this only applied to the inside service. So, as an example, when the Tories won in 1911, they fired thousands of outside public servants. But in 1918, the Civil Service Act extended this protection and this professionalization to all civil servants. The commission was required to reorganize the whole service on the basis of a classification of all positions within the bureaucracy.

2020

The early history of our provincial public service—and this is from a paper called From Arm's Length to Hands-On—was to create a Civil Service Commission in 1855. The main job was to oversee all government appointments. The Civil Service Act of 1878 basically entrenched the British system. The Public Service Act in 1918 entrenched that the government had to work with the civil service commissioner. Also in 1918, the first civil service commissioner was appointed. Dr J. M. McCutcheon became the first commissioner. Professor J.

E. Hodgetts, in his book *From Arm's Length to Hands-on*, says of McCutcheon, "Dr McCutcheon was so much in advance of his political overlords that he failed to ingratiate himself with them. But the public service of Ontario has reason to be deeply indebted to him.... His proselytizing set the public service commission of Ontario on a path of modernization"—and we don't want to take a step backwards, I suggest, by moving it to privatization—"along which it became all the more necessary to travel as the province moved into the large-scale administrative state of the second half of the century."

McCutcheon also began the process of classifying public service jobs. He saw this as a scientific management tool. I'd like to read from the book I've referred to, *From Arm's Length to Hands-On*, where McCutcheon says, "to remove inequalities and anomalies, to establish standards on which to base definite lines of promotion, to standardize salaries and to establish improved methods for increases, to establish a standard title and to specify the work requirements for every class of position in the public service, to provide for the information of the general public and employees in the public service a convenient summary of the various positions in the service and the qualifications necessary for the appointment thereto, the compensation paid and the promotions that may be expected"—again, a professionalization of the public service; what the public service was all about.

One of the earliest battles in the creation of the public service was to move from a patronage-based system to one which was merit-based: the changes to the classifications and the move toward further privatization, along with the general direction of this government to show that this battle is still going on.

Public service—from the Canadian Encyclopedia—"The convention of political neutrality in the public service is maintained by the principle of appointment on the basis of merit rather than on political affiliation. The traditional separation of politics and administration and of the anonymity of public servants"—again, I'm afraid this delegation from minister to deputy minister to other deputy ministers to other persons will merely move us back into that patronage privatization battle—"theoretically meant public servants could remain neutral in supporting the government in power. In recent years the recognition that politics, policy and administration are interrelated has modified this convention. The move to increased reliance on contract employees puts more employees under the whim of government patronage."

I sit on the standing committee on government agencies, and I can assure you, Speaker, that when it comes to our government agencies, government patronage is still alive and well.

In researching the history of the public service, I found some interesting quotes from the debate about the creation of the merit-based system. Newton Rowell, the Liberal opposition leader, spoke in favour of a public service based on merit. He said, "That in the judgement of this house the spoils and patronage systems are

inimical to the highest efficiency of the public service and to the best interests of the country; that the public interests demand the immediate creation of a non-partisan civil service commission with ample powers, and that all appointments and promotions in the public service shall be by merit after competitive examinations except in those cases where the conditions of the public service render this impracticable." Again, I'm afraid that with this delegation of power to be able to hire, fire, discipline, make regulations, if that's given to these other person or persons, ie, the private sector, we will be going backwards.

By way of motion in the House, Whitney, a former Premier of the province of Ontario, and who by this time in fact was Premier, said, and again I read From Arm's Length to Hands-On, "That this House ... recognizes the difficulties which would surround the operation of a system of so-called civil service [ie, merit] over a small number of officials, and that it would be wholly unwise and practically impossible to bring under such a system the various officials in the service of the province."

I think I've quoted far enough from those two. What we have to look at now I think are some of the arguments given by the government which will allow private information to be available to other than those in the professional public service. We know what happened, for example, with the provincial savings office when information was given to a private consultant that shouldn't have been. We're afraid that under this bill the same thing could happen. It allows the ministry's ability to collect information to be delegated to that other person or persons. Along with other changes, this information could be held by, maintained and used by private companies for other than government business.

This government, in my view, has had a terrible track record on people's personal information and simply can't be trusted. The last time the government talked about privatizing personal information, they introduced a bill that would have given police access to the most sensitive of our health records. If they no longer have the accountability for this having happened, who then would we go to, if some private sector contact that was under contract were to do this? I believe what would happen is that the government would say, "I'm sorry. That wasn't us who did it; it was them. It's not our fault; it's their fault."

Personal information and the integrated human resources program that the government itself has at the present time would be available to the private sector. Whatever personal information the government chooses to include in the integrated human resources program, including personal medical information, could be given to the private sector.

**2030**

I'm going to conclude, and it will still take the better part of my time, by reading some comments of a very respected public servant on leaving the public service after 30 years. Secretary of the Cabinet Rita Burak, in this article I'm going to read from, was accepting a

plaque from Premier Harris on the occasion of her retirement from the public service. She said, "I know I'm speaking to the converted and I don't have to go into why a professional, non-partisan public service matters, but I think it is important that we not take it for granted. Where its independence is tampered with, neither the government of the day nor the people of the province are well served."

In June 2000, Rita Burak went on to say, "Today both are well served by the OPS at all levels. I've had the opportunity over the years to visit farms, labs, psychiatric hospitals and jails, get under trucks and down in mines with inspectors, sit beside Family Responsibility Office and rent control clerks as they took complaints from the public, and I've even ridden in a water bomber. I know first-hand that from the front line to the senior management group, this organization is full of hard-working, principled staff." Then, I ask, why would we want to delegate that responsibility and that authority to an unknown person or persons?

She goes on to say, "But sadly, many people in the public service today feel that the public service is no longer valued. I've discussed this with deputy ministers and senior managers and I'll repeat some of what I've said.

"The professional public service in Canada is being challenged on a number of fronts: but the most disturbing one is the public's cynicism about government in general, and politicians and public servants in particular.

"To my colleagues in the civil service, I want to say again, although it may seem that our present environment is calling our values into question, we can and we must work together to affirm our value individually and collectively.

"The negative view of us that some hold isn't fair, but it is still a reality we have to contend with. The hard truth is that our value will no longer be conferred; it will no longer be determined by how large our budgets are or how many people report to us, or in any of the traditional ways we have had to build our sense of self-worth."

At the conclusion, Ms Burak said, "If there isn't a conscious effort to do this, the province will suffer because not only will the staff we now employ, who have the knowledge and expertise we need, leave the public service, but we won't be able to attract the next generation of professionals to government service." I suggest that this legislation does absolutely nothing to attract the next generation of professionals to government service.

I am going to conclude by going back to the comments I made at the beginning about some of the areas this bill covers. Contrary to what the member from Kitchener Centre said, I don't think this is merely a bill that has a limited number of changes and is not a complete overhaul. It may not be a complete overhaul, but its limited number of changes certainly go deep into the public service.

Words like "democratic," "flexibility" and "streamlined" were used, but I don't think you can have authority

without accountability, and you certainly can't have accountability without the authority. If we delegate that authority, if in any way that authority and accountability is delegated to the private sector, to that person or those persons, whoever they are—and the bill certainly doesn't identify who they are, so I can only assume it's the private sector—then where is the public going to go for answers?

This piece of legislation is about more than choice. It's about privacy and, yes, it is about accountability. But in my view it's not about improving accountability; it's about reducing accountability. We think this bill will lead to an increase in the number of contract workers employed by the Ontario public service and, as I mentioned earlier, this is done through the introduction of term classified and three-year term unclassified employees.

In my view it takes away the professionalism and reliability of public servants. With more people concerned about their jobs, there will be a greater reluctance to speak out against improper government activities. For example, public servants concerned about their jobs will not speak out against the government cuts that led to the likes of the Walkerton crisis.

It allows a deputy minister to delegate to any other deputy minister his or her powers to fire, hire, promote, transfer and discipline. How is a public servant to know to whom they report if this can be delegated to any other deputy minister? In fact, it will allow, I believe, a problem to grow within the public service where it will become more disorganized because they won't know to whom they're reporting. There have to be definite lines of authority. Without doubt, there can be co-operation between ministries—in fact, you've probably found there are too many silos today. But what you want to do is get co-operation between those ministers and those ministries, and to do it you don't have to have one minister delegating responsibility for employees to another minister. I think the growing privatization of the public service will cause this. A deputy minister could delegate to a private company, as they have, authority for jails, environmental protection and public safety issues. This we oppose. This actually reduces accountability, since it blurs the lines of responsibility.

It was mentioned earlier in debate that it establishes that a criminal conviction is conclusive proof that an employee committed the action in question, and it removes the grievance board's ability to make an independent decision regarding the criminal activity. This is something that I think should be discussed further. I think the general public and a reasonable person would think that should be the case. But we've had government backbenchers raising questions about the judiciary, raising questions about the courts. If they're going to raise questions about the courts, how do you think our civil service feels when those criminal convictions are the sole authority and can't be grieved? I think this is something we should debate further.

## 2040

To conclude my remarks on this, I go back to one of the most important things: that it allows the public service to privatize the collection of personal information for human resources purposes. Prior to Christmas there was an act introduced that created a great deal of concern in the general public, and I think even within this House, and that was when certain private health information could be passed on to other authorities. We're told that the Management Board information system doesn't have health information in it, that it's only information with regard to employment and service, that information you would normally find in what they termed a regular employment record. But the problem is that it doesn't limit that information, and if more than that is available—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Crozier:** Well, the member for Kitchener Centre says I know better. I thought I knew better before this government gave out private information through the provincial savings office. I thought I knew better, but it didn't happen that way—it didn't happen that way. We found that private information, confidential information, was given to private sources. I think any reasonable person would have thought before that happened that it would never happen. But it did. All I'm doing is raising the flag. All I'm doing is saying that if you move into an area where private information which has been held by government employees who are sworn to that privacy, when that moves into the private sector, we may have a problem.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** It can't go into the private sector.

**Mr Crozier:** Well, that will be determined through debate, I'm sure. I'd like to see it in the bill; perhaps we can put it in the legislation through amendments. But there are no assurances in this. In fact, we were told at the outset that this really makes a limited amount of changes and it's not much of an overhaul. I think all three government speakers downplayed this: "Really, it's been a hundred and some years since it was revised, so shouldn't we just do it because it needs to be done now?" Well, time does march on. Government operations do change, but we have to be, absolutely without question, careful when it comes to the confidential information of our employees. All I want in this are those kinds of assurances that the same thing can't happen as happened with the naming of young offenders, or that can't happen with the confidential information that got out through the Ontario provincial savings offices.

We raise these questions. I've tried this evening to give to the government members and others here the reasons why we have a professional public service, the reasons why all this came about. Just because it's been that way—in fact, maybe because it's been that way—for over a hundred years, it should remain that way, we should do our very best to maintain a professional public service, a professional civil service, one that would attract professionals—and not just on a one-year basis or a three-year basis, but one that would attract some of the

very best people. We need those kind of people in government. The same has been said, that we need to attract the very best to elected office. Well, we need the very best in a professional civil service that can give unbiased advice, neutral advice to the employers, ie, the province.

They can do this without any fear of retribution and they can do this without any fear that they have to treat the government of the day in a favourable way so that either the contract can be renewed at the end of the three years or, if this is moved into the private sector, that they have to do any particular favours for the government of the day.

I want to just emphasize one more time the problem that we think we might run into with the breakup of Ontario Hydro. My colleague from Renfrew has mentioned time and time again that access to information will be restricted. What we want to assure ourselves of is that we don't have another Ontario Hydro situation—Hydro One, it's called now—where decision-making that's very critical to the well-being of the province of Ontario and its citizens is not available for public scrutiny. We want to be sure in this legislation, if and when it's passed, and if and when some of the responsibilities that are currently under deputy ministers are moved into the private sector, that the public still has the ability to get the information it needs so it can better judge the actions of the government or of the government employees or of the government ministers. That's all we're asking. We want to avoid those kinds of situations.

I think there's a lot of work to be done with this piece of legislation. The form that it's in now, although some of the objectives may be laudable, we're awfully concerned about how you're moving toward those objectives and that you may be moving toward them outside the professional civil service that we have today.

As it moves on through second reading debate, and as we move on to committee and hopefully public hearings, public consultation, in a democratic way, we'll be able to determine those issues and if necessary amend the legislation. We will have more to say about that at a later date.

I had my colleague from Renfrew here this evening and I was a little bit concerned about going into history with him sitting here, because he might be able to remind me of some things that I didn't mention. I thank you for your attention.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Kormos:** I am somewhat grateful for the scholarly presentation of that history. The member makes reference to the member from Renfrew. The member from Renfrew would have been citing by virtue of his own experience; he's been here probably for a good chunk of that history of the civil service.

I have to tell you, I don't find any of these objectives laudable. I think they're objectives that should be of great concern to a whole lot of Ontarians, because it's all about the little pieces of the puzzle and it all goes back, in my view—I could be wrong—to Bill 26. I recall then talking

about Bill 26 as being, again, but pieces of the puzzle. Here are more little pieces of the puzzle, and the picture that's emerging is not the kind of picture of Ontario that my folks down in Welland or other people of their same generation in Pelham or Thorold or St Catharines, or I suspect anywhere in this province, wanted to put together or they wanted to build or wanted to paint for their kids and grandkids. This is very much a radical change from the kind of Ontario that Ontarians were prepared to invest in as taxpayers, that Ontarians were prepared to build things in, publicly owned as public institutions, so that everybody could share in the services they provided, and so that the services they provided will be provided by an independent and neutral public service.

2050

So I am very concerned that people are being lulled by the soporific tones of government—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** The member for Essex suggested he was raising a red flag. I would suggest that it wasn't so much a red flag that he raised but a red herring.

He has oversimplified the issue. The bill does not delegate all powers in all cases. The decisions would be made on a case-by-case basis only.

He suggested that this was an effort to privatize the public service. Again, I want to say that all we're trying to do is to be able to hire expert advice. We're trying to be able to hire professional advice on a time-related basis. Nevertheless, some of these time-related jobs may be required for up to a three-year period, and it is for that reason that we need to change the legislation.

He thinks that because McCutcheon modernized the public service in 1918, and that the public service should be thankful for it, perhaps it doesn't need modernizing. The year 1918, I would remind the member from Essex, was 83 years ago.

He has suggested that the delegation of authority to members of another ministry is perhaps also delegating the authority automatically outside of the ministry. That is not the case. He asks why it is necessary to delegate the authority to members of another ministry. Well, it may be necessary to bring that member from one ministry into another ministry because of the technological expertise that employee has. It may also be necessary because they don't have enough work in that ministry and we need that work in this ministry.

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** I'd like to compliment the member for Essex. As always, he does a thorough job of finding out the information that's necessary for us to make good decisions.

The members on the other side have been using terms like, "We value our public service," and then in the same breath they turn around and say, "But you're not expert enough. We need to go outside of the expertise that you have."

I just want to make sure we understand what we're talking about. In a task force report that was done on public service values and ethics, we see that the basic argument in support of public service is its democratic

mission, helping ministers under law and the Constitution to serve the common good. Public servants help ministers make well-informed decisions by giving them good advice.

They do that in three ways. First, they have the knowledge, the skills and the expertise to generate that advice. Second, they have the public interest at heart and they will generate that advice for the good of the public. Third, politicians will get honest advice in the public interest even if it is not what the government of the day wants to hear. Public servants will speak the truth to powers that be.

So we have to make sure we clearly understand what the member for Essex was trying to point out to the members on the other side. As much as you don't have faith in the public service, which you've slowly eroded to very little at all, we do. We understand that their expertise is valuable, and we do value them as employees of Ontario.

The fact remains that the member for Essex was very clear in his arguments with this member on the other side. That is the one that's important to us, and that is the privacy issue. Do we want this government to be in charge of taking care of that privacy that's so dearly recognized by the citizens of Ontario? You think about POSO, and I don't think so. This government was found in contempt about privacy.

**Mr Dunlop:** I'd like to compliment the member from Windsor-Essex for being able to go on so long today. I think he's done a good job, and he did bring out some very interesting points.

But the point I'd like to make on Bill 25, and I'd like to re-emphasize it, is the importance particularly in some of the ridings. I see the Solicitor General is here on House duty tonight. I know that he's very interested. Quite often he's probably asked by civilian OPP employees, as well as probably some of the uniformed officers, about the inequities in the system the way it stands today. Here we have police forces from all over the province. I was just talking to my colleague behind me about the Ingersoll police force, the Barrie police force, the Toronto Police Services Board, which have literally hundreds of employees. Both the uniformed officers and the civilian employees are all part of the same collective bargaining unit.

This has been very unfair as far as employees of the Ontario Provincial Police are concerned. I've had a number of these employees come to me at social functions I've been at and they've asked, "Why can we not belong to the same collective bargaining unit as our uniformed officers?" I don't have an answer. This bill will correct that. That's the one thing I would really like to see corrected in this bill. Whether it ends up going to public hearings or whatever, I'd like to see a fair, democratic vote that the employees of that particular association may want to hold.

That's my key point here tonight. I thank the other members in the House for their comments as well.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Crozier:** I'd like to thank the members for Niagara Centre and Brant and Simcoe North and, yes, I think I'd like to thank the member for Kitchener Centre. But I'd also like to thank two young people who work with me, Jamie Rilett and Kandice Ardiel, for helping me put this information together. I spoke for almost an hour. There's not much more I can say at this time, so thank you for your attention.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Kormos:** Speaker, I'm entitled to speak for an hour and I'm going to. The problem we've got is that it's a couple of minutes to 9, and I suspect you're going to stop me at around 9:30. That means that I've got to start tonight, talk for around 30 minutes, but tomorrow at 6:45, assuming that the government can pass their evening sitting motion tomorrow—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** They had a little problem today. You were here, Speaker. The government had a little problem. The whip almost swallowed his bubble gum when there was a quick count of heads and, holy yikes, he realized that what with the two abstentions from among the Tory caucus—just think, if those had been votes to the contrary instead of mere abstentions, it still would have been a victory for the government but an even smaller margin, an even narrower margin.

Things aren't going well for these guys: the simplest of propositions, to move a motion to sit in the evening, and they almost blew it. But I suspect that the whip blew a gasket in short order after that vote and that the sting of the whip was felt—I hear sound effects behind me—on the backsides of more than a few. You notice they're all sitting down. That's because they don't want us to see the cuts in the backs of their suit jackets where that whip got them, because the whip can be awfully hard on your Studio 267s, my friends.

The notice of motion is there, and I know where the New Democrats are going to be on that vote tomorrow.

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** All over the place.

2100

**Mr Kormos:** Well, I want to see whether the opposition can say no to this government when the government wants to hold a sessional day without a question period. I know the government likes these sessional days in the evening. They do, because they don't have question periods. For instance, today was a fascinating question period. I thoroughly enjoyed today's question period; I did. For a Monday, I thought, by God, this week got off to a good start here at Queen's Park. The week got going off bingo, bango, and I've got a feeling we've got some fascinating question periods to come.

Well, I don't know. You see, the Premier was here today to be in question period. If I suggest where he's going to be tomorrow, that's not commenting on his absence, because I don't really know, I won't know until tomorrow, but I'm told he left for Lausanne. I'm told that's in Switzerland. The Premier left for Lausanne. Did

I pronounce it right? Lausanne, Switzerland, the snow-capped Alps. Mont Blanc is somewhere on the horizon. That's the kind of pen he uses, the Mont Blanc. That's the expensive one.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** The Solicitor General was writing with a Mont Blanc earlier today.

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** My wife is Swiss. What do you expect?

**Mr Kormos:** Listen, for these people, nothing but the best, huh? For the government and its backbenchers and its frontbenchers and its peripatetic Premier, nothing but the best. We're not talking about driving up to Orillia to speak to the bill, Bill 25.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to draw your attention to the fact that the member is not speaking to the bill at hand. I think we would also like to know whether or not the member still owns his Corvette.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The first part was obviously a point of order. The member had moved in the direction of speaking to Bill 25 and he knows that is what he needs to do.

**Mr Kormos:** First, I want to thank you, Speaker, for your direction and guidance. You know I always welcome your counsel and I'm pleased to follow your direction. Of course I was moving a little bit off track, but not really, because we're talking about an overall agenda here. Surely I could talk about Bill 26 in the context of Bill 25, because there's a silver thread that has been travelling through several years now, since 1995, of this government's legislative agenda that indeed for all but the rarest of exceptions brings all this stuff together, draws Bill 25 into the frame of that puzzle, of that picture that's being painted.

First, because the speaker before me, Mr Crozier, was generous enough to thank his staff who assisted him, I want to thank some people too: the ministry staff, some political staff. Young Mr Derek O'Toole from the ministry of Management Board was over with a couple of his colleagues, I think another political staff and a bureaucrat, or it could have been two bureaucrats and one political, but they were over. Chris Watson, who's on our staff, helped me, because the bill is a mini-omnibus bill. That's what helped remind me of Bill 26, because Bill 26 was a big omnibus bill. This is a small omnibus bill.

The bill has amendments to several different statutes. When you look at the amendments standing alone, you don't really understand what's going on until you make reference to the act they're amending and read that act, or at least that part of the act, and see the amendment and see the impact it's going to have.

Let's see, there's one lawyer over here and there's one lawyer over there. Two lawyers. They were warned and admonished not to rely upon the headnotes, right? "Don't rely upon headnotes." How many times were you told that? If you were told it once, you were told it a million times, right? But you did anyway, didn't you? You did; I know you did. You were down there in that law school

library, it was 11 o'clock at night and you said, "I know what they"—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Bill 25, because I'm getting to the explanatory notes.

You said, "I know what they told me about headnotes and I know that it was illustrated to me how headnotes can be deceptive," huh? Remember? "But, Lord knows, it's 11 o'clock. I'm tired. I'm going to rely upon the headnotes just this once." Maybe you got away with it one, twice, thrice, but sooner or later, you got caught, because the headnotes didn't tell the whole story. The headnote is the little précis at the beginning of the reported decision. Am I correct on that?

**Mr Carl DeFaria (Mississauga East):** Good for exam notes.

**Mr Kormos:** Thank you. I just wanted to make sure I was correct, so I consulted one of the lawyers here in the Tory benches.

Just as you can't rely on headnotes—those are the little Coles Notes for legal researchers—you can't always count on the explanatory notes. You can't. You can maybe do it once and get away with it, maybe twice, maybe thrice. I'm talking about just reading the explanatory notes and not looking at the sections and, more importantly, taking those sections and referring back to the act that they amend. But sooner or later, you get caught. It jumps up and bites you, right?

I see Mr DeFaria is nodding. He understands what I'm talking about, because he knows you can't just read the explanatory notes, just like you can't read the headnotes.

I'm especially grateful to Chris Watson, as well as Tim Hadwen and Tim Little. I'm going to tell you right up front, they're with OPSEU. I want to make it quite clear: I spent a good chunk of time with some OPSEU people analyzing this bill and its impact, not just on public sector workers but on the overall agenda that the Tories have been pushing in this province since 1995—the fact that this bill is critical.

Government members, if they're going to pursue their goal as Conservatives in this government, have to vote for the bill. It's critical, it's crucial to your overall agenda. Your support of this bill is critical to your agenda of broad privatization of public services in this province. This bill is critical to your agenda—you're nodding. I know you understand. He's nodding yes, because he gets it. Share it with your colleagues. Help them understand too that the bill is critical if you're going to pursue that sellout of public sector services and the assets related to those services to your American corporate, for-profit operators, like your new-found American, Utah-based friends who are going to operate your megajails, not with the goal in mind of corrections or rehabilitation or protection of the community, but making profits. That's what this corporation is all about. That's why it exists. It exists to make profits.

The shareholders of that private jail operator from Utah, the one that just got the contract for the Penetanguishene jail, are the beneficiaries of Bill 25.

Let's understand this: when the shareholders of that American Utah corporate for-profit jail operator meet with their board of directors and their CEO and the president of the company, the shareholders don't go, "Oh, I have a question. How many people did we rehabilitate this year?" The shareholders don't ask that, because this is a profit-making corporation. The shareholders don't say, "Oh, CEO of corporate US Utah correctional jail operator, how many communities did we make safer?" They don't ask that because that's not the job of a corporation. They say, "How much profit did we make?" Because that's the job of a corporation like the American Utah corporate for-profit jail operator, good friend of these guys here in this government who they brought up into Canada to run the province's biggest jail, to displace trained, professional, committed, capable correctional officers, members of our public service.

**2110**

Bill 25 is going to accommodate that Utah, American corporate for-profit jail operator. It's going to pave the road for them. It's going to make it more attractive for them. It's going to make it easier for them. It's going to make it—ah—more profitable for them. And the really obscene thing about this is not only that this government is selling off public corrections here in the province of Ontario to corporate for-profit operators, but it is selling it off to corporate for-profit operators who are going to drain the profits into the United States. The profits paid for with taxpayers' dollars are not even going to stay in Ontario or Canada. It is pretty nuts, isn't it?

Folks down where I come from don't consider that good business, don't consider that good government, don't consider that good fiscal planning; they think it's nuts. The folks down where I come from don't consider that a smart way to run a correctional system, because they know that American corporate for-profit jail operators don't have the safety of communities as their first objective or even as their second or their third, don't have rehabilitation of prisoners as their first, second, third or any of their objectives, but have as their objective, as corporations do—and this is neither good nor bad; this is simply the reality of it—have as their sole objective the creation of profits.

I had no qualms about sitting down with folks from OPSEU to talk about Bill 25 and what it means for public sector workers, what it means for public, historic, traditional and valuable public institutions in this province like corrections and, more importantly—most importantly, I suppose—what it means for the purpose, the potential and the future of the public sector in Canada, and Ontario particularly. It is all about what you believe in, what your values are. I understand that there are people here who don't believe there should be common public ownership and accountability of anything in our society.

I grew up, like you, believing, because these are the values that prevailed in my family, my community, that certain things like education, things like—yes, it was in my youth that health care was implemented. I'm old

enough to remember lots of things, but I remember that time in this province, in this country, when you didn't have public health care. I think you might be too, Speaker. I'm serious. If you think back to when you were not so little a kid, you remember a time when maybe your folks, like mine, had to sit at that Formica kitchen table and make hard and tough decisions about whether you took one of your kids to the doctor the next day because he or she was running a fever, because of what it was going to cost.

It wasn't that long ago, was it? It was within the lifetime of the vast majority of members of this Legislature. It wasn't that long ago that folks across this province, across this country, folks like mine and like yours, factory workers and farmers, clerks in stores, sat down at their kitchen table and had to struggle with a proposition that to many people now seems wacko. What are parents doing debating whether or not to take a little kid who's running a high fever, like 103 degrees or 104 degrees, that they should have to sit at the kitchen table and say, "Maybe we should or maybe we shouldn't"? They did. It wasn't that long ago. It was before public health care.

Those folks, people like our parents and our grandparents, hard-working people, were prepared to invest in public health care and they did. They were prepared to invest in public education and they did. They were prepared to invest in their communities. They were prepared to pay taxes to build water systems and have those publicly owned and publicly maintained. They were prepared to invest in sewage systems, in roads, in sidewalks and, in many other communities, in public transportation systems. They made those investments. The very rich didn't build those things, because the very rich never needed public health care. It was never an issue. The very rich never needed public education. The very rich never needed public water systems and public sewage systems and those sorts of things. The very rich didn't need public highways. They had private railway cars and they owned the railways. Working people built the railways, but the very rich owned them.

Things we have come to know as being the norm in Ontario—and very characteristic of what it means to be Canadian—publicly owned things, publicly run things, things that are publicly accountable through government, were built by hard-working people. But this government doesn't believe in those public things. It doesn't believe in public education. It made that very clear with its budget speech. It has introduced into Ontario the brave new world of public tax dollars going to support, sustain and maintain—at the expense of public education—private, for-profit and, all too often, very elitist schools.

This government has made it quite clear where it stands on health care. I can't wait for the Romanow inquiry. It's made it quite clear that private health care is very much on the table. This government, in its budget, delegates to the SuperBuild fund the responsibility for identifying all the other public assets that are going to be put on the auction block and sold off to its American, corporate and—understand this—for-profit friends, who

are going to bleed public monies out of this province, who are going to let public health care, public education, public water systems, public sewer systems, public road-building—this government doesn't believe the public should own its highways. Its budget announced that peculiar little highway going along Highway 7, through some of the most pristine agricultural and rural land, into Peterborough.

That's what Bill 25 is helping to facilitate. That's why this government needs Bill 25, and that's why its backbenchers are going to be whipped into voting for it. It's going to be a three-line whip, because Bill 25 is all about making Ontario more attractive, more profitable for the Utah-based, American corporate, for-profit jail operators and for the, as often as not, non-Canadian based, corporate, for-profit highway builders and owners.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Yes, it's true. I've got one backbencher thinking about it, one backbencher paying attention. He's contemplating it.

It's true. Think about it. Bill 25 is critical. These corporate, for-profit operators are going to come in and buy up our highways and own them and charge us tolls to travel on them. They're going to come in here and buy up our jails and own them and operate them for profit like the highways.

**2120**

If these corporate, for-profit operators are going to come into Ontario—this government says it's open for business. Oh, yeah, open for business. Right on. Open for business with the corporate vultures that will come here and rob public assets from Ontario's citizens who built those assets with their investments and their hard labour: roads, highways, jails, water systems, sewer systems, schools and hospitals.

It was an absurd proposition to think there could be such a thing as private, corporate, for-profit—again, we know where they're based, down in Arkansas. It is in Arkansas where Rural/Metro is based. That's right, Arkansas. Rural/Metro: private, corporate, for-profit, American operators of ambulance services and fire-fighting services.

This is the biggest yard sale. This is the mother of all yard sales. Mike Harris has got everything out there on the front lawn, and the sticker prices can't be beat. Not only is the sticker price rock bottom, but this government persists in legislation—I've got to tell you I have no qualms about sitting down with OPSEU people. I'm proud of OPSEU. Man, I'm proud of OPSEU. I couldn't be more proud of anything than of the fact we have OPSEU and other trade unions like them. In the context of the public sector and public service and public services, Leah Casselman and OPSEU were there at the very forefront.

I can't help but suspect that this bill is more than a little bit of punishment for OPSEU, for the incredible effectiveness of their strike. It is oh so long ago now, isn't it, that OPSEU members took on this government, took on its privatization agenda, took on its corporate

agenda? OPSEU members and their leadership—Leah Casselman—took on this government and this government's agenda to beat up on unionized workers and beat up twice as hard on non-union workers and beat up three times as hard on the poorest workers in this province. This bill contains more than a little bit of payback. Let's take a look at those provisions that are going to impact not only on OPSEU but as well on AMAPCEO, the Association of Management, Administrative and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario, and PEO, the Professional Engineers Ontario.

To be fair, the vast majority of workers who are being targeted, the workers who are working at Ontario Provincial Police offices across the province, are OPSEU workers. What I found very interesting in the briefing with the ministry types—because I was very concerned about the ballot. First, I was concerned about the fact that the Ontario Provincial Police Association isn't a union. They're not entitled to sign up members and appear before the Ontario Labour Relations Board. It's against the law—you knew that, didn't you?—against the law. The Ontario Provincial Police Association is not a union, and cannot sign up members and appear before the OLRB. Well, the bill took care of that. The bill exempts them from the requirement. It creates a little window of opportunity.

OPSEU workers don't even have a *prima facie* quarrel with that. But what I had great concern about was the inability of the brain trust from the ministry to explain to me how that ballot was going to be designed. Was the ballot going to permit workers to choose OPSEU or the OPPA? I didn't know, so I asked, which is what a briefing is all about. I asked. I became very concerned about the fact that the response wasn't clearly one where, yes, those workers would have that chance. You see, one association/union—union by virtue of statute; union for a day is what the bill makes OPPA—can't effectively take over but a part of another bargaining unit, and that's what's happening. The bill changes the law for a moment, long enough for OPPA to do that as well, to go after only that portion of OPSEU members, only that portion of the collective bargaining unit that happens to work in OPP stations.

Again, those workers, of course, have every right to decide what union they belong to—union. But my fear, in the context of what I was told, or, more importantly, what I wasn't told during the course of that briefing, is that the process is going to be so patently unfair, so biased that it can't be perceived as anything other than punishment for OPSEU for their opposition to this government's most right-wing, most draconian and most vicious of measures.

Let me tell you what it means to OPPA. These numbers won't be bang on, because they rely on some guesstimates. My guesstimate is that around 2,500 OPSEU members are with the OPP across the province. At an average salary of \$40,000 and with OPSEU union dues at 1.425%, it comes out to \$570 a year per worker, in my view, cheap at any price to belong to a union that's

going to fight for you the way OPSEU does and is going to represent your interests at collective bargaining time they way OPSEU does, but people make their own decisions. That's \$1.4 million a year in dues that this government is facilitating being taken over by the Ontario Provincial Police Association.

A mere question, but is OPSEU being punished for its participation in that strike and for leading, being the vanguard of that struggle against privatization here in the province of Ontario, privatization of jails, privatization of waterworks, privatization of roads, privatization of schools, privatization of hospitals? More importantly, is the Ontario Provincial Police Association being rewarded? Then one has to question exactly for what: for their conduct during the OPSEU strike here at Queen's Park? I find the circumstances around that little sweetheart deal between this government and the Ontario Provincial Police Association, not a union, mind you, to be intriguing, at the very least intriguing.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** Are you accusing the police—

**Mr Kormos:** Again, I simply raise it as a question. People can draw their own conclusions. People can draw the appropriate inference. That inference can be

strengthened when we're finally told—because I would like a commitment from this government.

I want to make it quite clear that the NDP is not supporting this legislation. The New Democrats at Queen's Park are going to fight this legislation as hard as we can, no two ways about it. Quite frankly, we'll do everything we can to get this legislation into committee, because I think this government should take Bill 25 around the province and let public sector workers comment, because you said you consulted. The other day, the Minister of Community and Social Services said he spoke with Alan Borovoy and with Sid Ryan about his wacko urine testing scheme; you know, have social service workers there with their little plastic cups. There'll be tanker truckloads of Mike Harris-collected urine criss-crossing the province from one social services office to the next.

A problem, Speaker? You're twitching, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 2130.*



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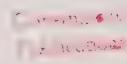
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No. 16A



Nº 16A

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 15 May 2001**

**Mardi 15 mai 2001**

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 15 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 15 mai 2001

*The House met at 1330.*

*Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** Ontario's affordable housing crisis deepens, yet page 15 of Ontario's 2001 budget proclaims, "Housing Outlook Healthy." What unmitigated gall.

Here are the facts:

Ontario's vacancy rate is 1.6%, with the city of Ottawa having the dubious distinction of being the tightest rental market in the country, at 0.2%.

Rents are rising at double the rate of inflation while Ontario's three-million-plus tenants are seeing their household incomes drop. On average, three families per hour are applying for scarce social housing units in the city of Toronto.

Where is the provincial leadership to even acknowledge Ontario's affordable housing crisis, let alone to provide solutions? I can tell you one thing: it's not found in the 2001 Ontario budget. Clearly, the Harris government has once again failed Ontario's working families.

I have introduced Bill 37, the Affordable Housing Incentives Act. This bill would provide an exemption to section 111 of the Municipal Act and it would give Ontario's municipalities the ability and flexibility to find local solutions in partnership with interested parties to build affordable housing. I acknowledge that this measure is not a complete solution. However, it's an example that once again Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party are presenting positive ideas on behalf of Ontario's working families.

I'm calling on the government to do the right thing: to finally show some leadership and pass the Affordable Housing Incentives Act.

#### SUMMER ACTIVE CAMPAIGN

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton):** I'm sure we all have a concern for the health and physical well-being of Ontario's residents. Physical activity helps to reduce health care costs as well as stress, anxiety and depression. That is why I'm encouraging everyone here today to just "Try it."

May 11 was National Try It Day and marked the kick-off to this year's Summer Active campaign. Summer Active is a seasonal campaign designed to get Canadians active. Parks and Recreation Ontario, along with recreation, health, sport, workplace and other physical activity leaders across the province, invites you to join in on this year's Summer Active campaign.

Summer Active 2001 runs until June 22. This year's "Try It" theme encourages those Ontarians who want to become active to take the first step toward adding physical activity into their daily lives.

Summer Active is part of Active Ontario, a joint initiative between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

As part of the campaign, physical activity leaders from across the province will be hosting special events in their communities. It is estimated that 61% of Ontarians are not active enough to achieve optimal health benefits. According to the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, physical inactivity levels have declined since the 1980s, going from 80% in 1981 to 61% in 1999.

The benefits that can be achieved through physical activity are endless. Physical activity has been shown to reduce the risk of obesity, depression, heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, stroke and colon cancer, to name a few. Physical activity provides energy and strengthens muscles and bones.

I encourage everyone to look for and participate in their local Summer Active events. Let's all get summer active.

#### AGRICULTURAL HALL OF FAME

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** It is an honour to have the opportunity to congratulate the 2001 inductees to the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame: Alexander Connell, Eugene Whelan, Martin A. Drew, William Thomas Ewen, Ernest Andrew Kerr and Kenneth Lantz.

I would like to pay special tribute to the following two individuals from Essex and Chatham-Kent. Eugene Whelan needs no introduction. He is an officer of the Order of Canada, former member of the Senate of Canada, former Minister of Agriculture for Canada and former ambassador to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. He remains one of Canada's most outstanding agriculture ministers and spokespersons for his industry.

Martin Drew provided extraordinary leadership and vision during turbulent, depressed times in Ontario's agricultural history. He was involved in every agricultural organization in Kent county. Martin Drew encouraged producers to establish innovative new marketing schemes and is recognized as one of the province's influential pioneer agriculturists. I am proud to say that he was my aunt's father-in-law.

Unfortunately, there isn't enough time to acknowledge all the inductees. The achievements of these unselfish individuals are too numerous to mention. Through their dedication and commitment, they have made tremendous contributions to the betterment of agriculture and to our rural community.

#### ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** I am happy today to say hello to my friends in the gallery from the Ontario Association for Community Living. I'd like to express our government's support for people with developmental disabilities. We're proud to invest in the success of organizations like the Ontario Association for Community Living. I am delighted to play a small part in promoting a very admirable goal, a goal that the Ontario Association for Community Living has battled tirelessly for, which is to ensure that every person in this province lives with dignity.

This association has helped our communities for over 50 years. From their modest beginning, they have grown to over 12,000 members with 100 locations across Ontario. Their volunteers have touched the lives of many people in each of our ridings. They deserve all the praise of the government of Ontario, and more.

The Mike Harris team has a genuine respect for the hard-working staff and volunteers who dedicate their lives to helping the disabled. Our investment of an additional \$197 million to the Ontario Association for Community Living only supplements the already strong and vibrant spirit of this organization.

I was honoured to attend their day at the races on Saturday, only one example of the events, conferences and poster campaigns that the Ontario Association for Community Living uses to promote the awareness of enhanced services for vulnerable people.

We must also remember the families of those that the association benefits. These families show a tremendous and uncompromising love for their children. They compel the Ontario Association for Community Living and the government of Ontario to promote dignity and respect for our province's children.

#### SCIENCE FAIR

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** Over 450 of our country's brightest and most innovative young scientific minds have gathered at Queen's University in Kingston this week for the annual Canada-

Wide Science Fair: A Science Odyssey Through the Thousand Islands.

Students ranging in age from 12 to 19, representing 110 regions from all across Canada, are displaying more than 400 of the best science and technology projects completed by students in grades 7 to OAC. They represent more than 500,000 science and technology projects completed by students across the country.

The opportunity to display their imaginative and innovative skills, and the ability to exchange ideas and information in such a historic setting as Queen's and Kingston, will undoubtedly be a life-changing experience for many of the young people involved.

From personally viewing some of the projects yesterday after the opening ceremony, I can say without reservation that the calibre of the exhibits is simply outstanding and top-notch. Some of the projects have been compared to the equivalent of master's and PhD material.

Over 230 judges, many recruited from our two world-renowned universities, Queen's University and the Royal Military College, will examine the projects and award medals in six categories: life, biotechnology, earth and environment, engineering, physical and mathematical, and computing.

Our hats are off to the three co-chairs, Sandra Davison, Heather Hight of the Limestone District School Board, and Sue Blake of Queen's University, and the more than 200 volunteers who have made this annual event of the Youth Science Foundation Canada such an overwhelming and outstanding success.

1340

#### OAK RIDGES MORAINE

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** On Thursday, May 10, I was named by the Speaker and was asked to withdraw remarks directed to the member for Scarborough East. I refused to withdraw those remarks and was kicked out of the Legislature for the day. I want to say to this Legislature that that decision was not taken lightly.

I came into the House that morning to speak in support of a bill put forward to protect the Oak Ridges moraine. Although it was watered down from the bill Mr Gilchrist had introduced in the last session, it still went in the right direction in terms of protecting the Oak Ridges moraine. I brought as many members from my caucus as I could to come and support the member in terms of getting this bill sent to a legislative committee for debate.

We came in good faith under the impression that that bill would be sent by the member—at least he would attempt to send it—to a legislative committee. However, to our shock and surprise, when the time came and the Speaker stood up and suggested it go to the committee of the whole House, the member for Scarborough East just sat in his seat and didn't stand up to ask that it be sent to a committee.

Mr Speaker, I felt betrayed, and the whole community who are working and have been working for years to

protect the Oak Ridges moraine, who were looking forward to this bill going out to the committee, feel betrayed. I would say shame on the member for Scarborough East. He should be ashamed of himself.

### POLICE WEEK

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** Yesterday, my honourable colleague Solicitor General David Turnbull informed the House that May 13 to 19 is Police Week throughout Canada and the United States. Today I would like to ask the House to once again recognize all our police officers throughout Ontario on this International Peace Officers Memorial Day.

Members of our law enforcement agencies play an essential role in safeguarding the rights and freedom of all citizens. I would ask that everyone join in commemorating police officers past and present who, by their faithful and loyal devotion to their responsibilities, render a dedicated service to the communities they serve.

Recently, the second annual remembrance ceremony took place at the Ontario Police Memorial just outside this building. The Lieutenant Governor, the Premier and the Solicitor General joined with families and police to pay tribute to the 211 officers who have made the supreme sacrifice. These officers gave their lives while protecting the people of Ontario.

This week we celebrate the accomplishments of the thousands of police officers who protect us daily. It is also appropriate to pause and remember those who have died while on duty. They are gone but not forgotten.

I encourage each of the honourable members to acknowledge the police officers in their communities. It is because of them that Ontario continues to be one of the safest places in the world to live, work and raise a family.

### ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** Last week I attended a party with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act committee—Windsor-Essex. It was the sixth anniversary recognition of the Ontario government's doing absolutely nothing about an Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

They asked me to bring six gifts to Premier Harris. One is a fact sheet outlining the demographic needs of Ontarians with disabilities; two, Ontarians with disabilities buttons, a reminder to the Premier that four out of five Ontarians support an effective Ontarians with Disabilities Act; three, a copy of the Ontario Human Rights Commission report that promotes and clarifies the rights of persons with disabilities. Another gift is a blueprint for a strong and effective Ontarians with Disabilities Act—this was previously given to the Premier. Another gift is a symbolic \$100 bill, a reminder that money is not a barrier to the implementation of an effective Ontarians with Disabilities Act; and six, a ballot that's a reminder that 1.5 million Ontarians with disabilities vote.

Ontarians with disabilities are not different. They just do things differently. They do things well and with dignity. Premier, give Ontarians with disabilities dignity. Give them an effective Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

I am pleased to welcome as well people from the Association for Community Living in my community and those from across Ontario who are with us today.

### BRAMPTON BATTALION

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre):** I take this opportunity to talk about one of Ontario's most successful Ontario Hockey League teams, the Brampton Battalion.

The Battalion, in only their third season since joining the OHL, made the playoffs for the second straight year. This followed a strong fifth-place finish in their conference.

In the first round, the Battalion made short work of the fourth-place Guelph Storm, eliminating them in four straight games. The Battalion then faced the first-place Erie Otters in the next round, to lose a very close series in five games.

Congratulations to team owner Scott Abbot, president Mike Griffin; and especially director of hockey operations and head coach Stan Butler. On the ice, the team was led by NHL future stars such as Rostislav Klesla, Columbus' fourth overall draft pick last year, and Raffi Torres, fifth overall pick of the New York Islanders.

A major highlight included the first time ever that a junior team has sent five representatives to the World Junior Championships. Stan Butler was a coach of Team Canada and brought teammates Raffi Torres and Jay Harrison with him, while Klesla and Lukas Havel played for the world champion Czech Republic. Further, Klesla was also voted runner-up for the OHL's best defenceman and made first OHL all-star.

The future looks bright in Brampton, with exciting young players making their way through the ranks. On behalf of my constituents, thank you, Brampton Battalion, for an exciting season. Beat the Slush Puppies.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I thank the member for his statement.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** I actually won a Memorial Cup. I have the ring, but I ended up in the Ontario Legislature. For those who don't make it, there is always another profession that you can end up with.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Today we have with us in the Speaker's gallery Mr Bob Speller, member of the House of Commons for the riding of Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant. Please join me in welcoming our federal colleague.

We also have in the Speaker's gallery today and I am also pleased to welcome Mr Jesse Flis, a former member

of Parliament for Parkdale-High Park, who is here with members of the Association for Community Living.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### NIAGARA CENTRAL AIRPORT COMMISSION ACT, 2001

Mr Kormos moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr11, An Act to amend The Welland-Port Colborne Airport Act, 1976.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 84, this bill stands referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 96(d), the following changes be made to the ballot list for private members' public business: Mrs McLeod and Mr Phillips exchange places in order of precedence such that Mrs McLeod assumes ballot item number 74 and Mr Phillips assumes ballot item number 13.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet tonight from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1350 to 1355.*

**The Speaker:** Would the members kindly take their seats.

Ayes	Nays
Agostino, Dominic	Gravelle, Michael
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie
Bartolucci, Rick	Hodgson, Chris
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hoy, Pat
Boyer, Claudette	Hudak, Tim
Brown, Michael A.	Jackson, Cameron
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen
Cleary, John C.	Johnson, Bert
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank
Coburn, Brian	Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Crozier, Bruce	Martinik, Gerry
Cunningham, Dianne	Maves, Bart
Curling, Alvin	Mazzilli, Frank
Di Cocco, Caroline	McLeod, Lyn
Dombrowsky, Leona	Miller, Norm
Duncan, Dwight	Molini, Tina R.
Dunlop, Garfield	Munro, Julia
Ecker, Janet	Mushinski, Marilyn
Elliott, Brenda	Newman, Dan
Gerretsen, John	O'Toole, John
Gilchrist, Steve	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Gill, Raminder	Peters, Steve

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays
Churley, Marilyn Kormos, Peter

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 64; the nays are 6.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

## POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** I'm proud to stand here today to provide parents and students across Ontario with details of our plan to ensure that every qualified and willing student will find a place in a college or university.

Our plan is comprehensive. The first phase of our plan involved increased support for research so that our institutions could attract and keep the best and brightest faculty and researchers needed to ensure high-quality education for our students.

We, with our partners, then invested \$1.8 billion to create 73,000 new student spaces across the province. This is the single largest capital expansion in post-secondary campuses in the last 30 years.

To help our students and parents better plan to manage the cost of their education, we have strengthened our student assistance programs, including establishing trust

funds at each of our institutions, introducing the Aiming for the Top student scholarships and requiring colleges and universities to set aside a portion of tuition fee revenue for student aid. We have also introduced a five-year cap on tuition that will limit increases in most programs to 2% per year.

Last week in the Ontario budget, my colleague the Minister of Finance announced the final component of our plan: an increase in operating support for colleges and universities by a projected \$293 million by 2003-04.

**1400**

When we decided to implement a new four-year high school program, we made a promise that we would provide the funds needed to ensure our colleges and universities were prepared to meet the increased enrolment demands created, in part, by the double cohort. We knew these students would provide a tremendous opportunity as we prepared Ontario for the changing economy of the 21st century. They just needed to have the high-quality and relevant education and training programs that would prepare them to compete and succeed with the best the world has to offer.

We have kept the promise we made to our parents and our students. Our colleges and universities now have a stable, multi-year period in which they can manage the expansion of their campuses. Our SuperBuild projects are being built, and we have committed more than \$297 million to colleges and universities since 1999 to modernize our existing buildings.

Our commitment to increased operating grants ensures that they have the money and the time needed to hire high-quality professors to staff those buildings, and our new \$10-million commitment over three years for the Premier's Platinum Awards for research excellence will strengthen our ability to attract and retain world-class senior researchers.

I want to thank my colleagues, including our student leaders, at our Ontario colleges and universities for their co-operation in developing and implementing our plans over the past years. With their support and their good advice, we have developed five-year enrolment forecasts and capital plans.

We also recognize that not all high school students choose to go on to post-secondary education. Some will move directly into the workforce; others will make other choices. We are expanding the apprenticeship and training system to ensure that these students have the full range of opportunities to find and keep high-paying jobs. The Ontario budget made a commitment to provide \$50 million over five years to update equipment and facilities at our colleges for apprenticeship programs, and a further \$33 million by 2004-05 to double the number of entrants to apprenticeship programs in the skilled trades.

I said our plan is comprehensive. It ensures that students will be prepared to reach their full potential whether they choose to go to college, university or into the skilled trades.

But we've done more than that. We are constantly taking action to ensure our students receive the relevant

education and training that prepares them for the changing needs of the workforce. In last week's budget, we announced an investment of \$60 million to establish a new Ontario Institute of Technology at Durham College in Oshawa. The new institute will provide university- and college-level programs and link post-secondary education and skills training with the needs of the marketplace.

The institute will be located on the Durham campus and will provide one-stop shopping for students looking for a mix of academic and hands-on experience. The institute will offer a wide range of career-oriented programs. Students will be able to earn an applied degree, diploma or other credential, depending on their program.

Through initiatives such as the ones I have outlined today, we are ensuring that future generations of students will be ready to seize the opportunities of a changing economy. We are also ensuring that Ontario has the educated, skilled and flexible workforce it needs for a strong, vibrant economy.

We are helping to create the conditions that provide Ontarians, no matter where they live in the province, with opportunities to take more responsibility for their personal and professional development so they can find and keep high-quality jobs that help them lead full and rewarding lives.

To echo the budget speech, we have provided a landmark response to the challenge of the 21st century, and in doing so we will fulfill the Premier's commitment that within 10 years, Ontario will enjoy the best-performing economy and highest quality of life in North America.

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):** This isn't a landmark response or statement; this is a land mine.

Your own task force has said we need \$500 million by 2005 to deal with the double cohort. You have promised \$293 million by 2004. Are you going to double this in a year, Minister, as your own task force recommends? The college sector will need \$291 million by 2004 to meet the double cohort demand, according to ACAATO. Ontario universities will require \$500 million to meet increasing enrolment demands by 2005, according to the Council of Ontario Universities. This will just keep us at the status quo, which is in the basement: 10th out of 10 provinces, 59th out of 60 jurisdictions, just ahead of Texas.

This new envelope of funding is expected to break down to \$223 million to universities and \$70 million for colleges. However, this funding increase is really only a percentage change of 1.8%, while inflation is increasing by 3.2% and the application rate for spaces in post-secondary has increased by 7.3%. In 1995, in one year, you cut the operating budgets by 15%. What is 1.8% going to do? Do you really think this is a substantial and significant increase in funding? Whom do you think you're fooling?

We are looking at thousands of students seeking spots in our post-secondary system. This is not a blip on the radar screen; this is a full-force tidal wave heading

toward our underfunded and demoralized public post-secondary institutions.

Ontario now spends 38% less per capita than the province of Newfoundland on university operating grants, and 18% below the national average. This budget will place us even lower. Our provincial expenditure on post-secondary declined by 30% between 1992 and 1999, the most significant decrease in the country.

Although this government continues to point to its SuperBuild fund as a source of capital dollars, we have actually got less than in any year in the last 20 years on infrastructure in this province. The measly \$100 million committed for maintenance costs is only a drop in the bucket. Your own task force says we need \$900 million for universities. Your task force says that. We need \$300 million for colleges: your task force says that.

There is no money for hiring professors. Read your own government document, Portals and Pathways. There's no money for the hiring of new professors. What will we do with the empty SuperBuild buildings if you do not allocate the necessary funds to begin the arduous process of hiring new professors? They are now being recruited by US schools with much healthier salaries.

Even our ability to buy books for our students has slipped. We used to have six out of the top 100 libraries in North America; we have one now, and that's at the University of Toronto.

Our college graduates will earn an average of 8% to 16% more than someone with a high school diploma; a university graduate, 9% to 15% more. They will pay an additional \$85,000 in taxes over their lifetimes as a result of post-secondary. Isn't this more than enough to offset the cost of subsidizing higher education in this province?

Isn't it interesting that Ontario is the only province in the country that doesn't have a training agreement with the federal government? We are losing nearly half a billion dollars a year because of this lack of an agreement.

The people of Ontario are concerned about the lack of security they experience in their jobs, education and access to post-secondary. A recent poll showed that 64% of individuals expressed finding it increasingly hard to afford college and university, and 62% of individuals recognize that tax cuts are not enough; we need a long-term plan to protect our prosperity. Some 79% of your own voters who were concerned were concerned that they wouldn't have the money to send their children to college and university.

This isn't a landmark; it's a land mine. Shame on you for letting Ontario's families down.

**1410**

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I want to respond to this statement by referring to a fact sheet that's been prepared by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, because, good citizens, this government doesn't listen to us and I think you want to know what the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations has said in response to a number of the problems that have been witnessed by the public. You

citizens are right there and I'm going to talk to you directly. Here's what they say in response to the minister's saying the government will ensure a place for every willing and qualified student. The concern I have, and the concern parents have, is that it will not guarantee a place for every student in this province. Here are the facts:

"Fact: According to the government's own estimates, an additional 88,000 qualified students will seek access to Ontario's universities and colleges over the next four years. That means creating new spaces equal to the enrolments of Ottawa, Laurentian, Western, McMaster, Queen's, Ryerson and Waterloo combined."

"Ontario government record: Universities and colleges have lost \$2 billion in cumulative public funding since 1996-97. No new public money has been made available to handle the projected enrolment increases."

"Fact: One of the reasons for the big increase in demand is the elimination of the OAC year creating the 'double cohort.'

"Ontario government record: The government eliminated the OAC year without making sure that qualified students have the chance to continue on to university or college."

"Fact: The government has acknowledged that Ontario universities and colleges will have to hire tens of thousands of professors, librarians and support staff."

"Ontario government record: To date no new public money has been allocated to hire needed faculty, librarians and support staff. Workload, burnout and injuries are increasing and the people of Ontario know that working conditions directly affect learning conditions."

"Fact: Statistics Canada has reported that a smaller percentage of students from lower and middle-income homes are seeking post-secondary education, compared to those from affluent backgrounds. The gap is growing. The student body at Ontario universities and colleges should reflect the diversity of Ontario residents and not be limited to a wealthy few."

"Ontario government record: The government has increased tuition fees by over 60% in the last five years for regulated programs. Graduate, professional and some college program fees have been deregulated, resulting in increases as high as 521%."

"Fact: It would cost \$1.06 billion to repair all of the deferred maintenance at Ontario universities. That's over \$4,200 per student."

"Ontario government record: The government of Ontario has not provided the public funds needed to make college and university campuses safe and productive."

They conclude by saying, "The time to reinvest in post-secondary education is now. If the government is serious about providing a place for every willing and qualified student, then it needs to make a commitment to public education. This is the only way we can keep pace with growing enrolments; hire new faculty, librarians and staff; provide high-quality services; make our buildings safe; keep tuition fees affordable; and provide better student assistance."

The Conservative government has all the evidence it needs that the public rejects their college and university underfunding policies. On May 7, OPSEU, the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, CUPE and the Canadian Federation of Students jointly released an Ipsos-Reid poll showing that two thirds of Ontarians are concerned about access to post-secondary education. Of the parents who are fearful their kids won't go to college or university, 80% said they won't be able to pay the higher fees charged under a Conservative government.

I say to you that if this government is not listening to you, the taxpayers and good citizens of Ontario, you have an opportunity in the very near future to send a message to this government that they will not be able to forget.

#### COMMUNITY LIVING WEEK

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: This week is dedicated in Ontario as Community Living Week. I believe we have unanimous consent for all parties to make a brief statement to recognize the hard work and dedication of those providing in the community living sector.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Mrs Molinari:** I rise today to acknowledge Community Living Week in Ontario. The purpose of this week is to raise awareness about people with developmental disabilities and the importance of including all people in the day-to-day life of our communities. It's also an excellent time to acknowledge the many dedicated people who work in the field of developmental services, including parents and volunteers, for their hard work and commitment to improving the lives of people with developmental disabilities in this province.

I know we have guests from the Ontario Association for Community Living, including Keith Powell, executive director, Lee Holling, past president, and several others from various community living groups from around the province with us today. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome them and thank them for their important contribution to community living.

My colleagues are aware of this government's commitment to support vulnerable people in Ontario, including adults and children with developmental disabilities. We consider it an important responsibility and a priority for the government to help people with developmental disabilities become as independent as possible while living at home on their own in their communities.

This commitment was reinforced by the budget announcement last week that the government will provide \$55 million this year, growing to nearly \$200 million by 2006-07, to enhance services for people with developmental disabilities and attract more quality caregivers. In addition, the government will invest \$67 million over five years to create new places to live for adults with developmental disabilities.

This is a remarkable demonstration of the government's desire to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities and to support the agencies and people working in this sector. The Honourable John Baird, Minister of Community and Social Services, will be announcing the details of this new funding initiative in the near future.

I'd like to stress that these are the latest in a series of initiatives the government has taken to help integrate people with developmental disabilities into the community. Since 1995 the government has invested more than \$100 million in additional funding for people with developmental disabilities. In fact, the government's total spending in the developmental sector last year exceeded \$965 million, more than has ever been spent before in this area.

Prior to last week's announcement, the largest investment in developmental services in a decade was made last May when the government announced it would provide an additional \$50 million to support people with developmental disabilities and their families to live in the community.

This included \$18 million for new accommodation in the community for more than 300 individuals, including adults living at home with aging parents and young adults leaving the child welfare system; \$6 million for the special services at home program to provide support for approximately 2,000 families caring for children and adults with developmental disabilities at home; and \$6 million for the creation of the innovative foundations initiative, which is funding new programs to help approximately 950 young people with developmental disabilities make the transition from school to employment or other community activity. The \$50-million announcement also included funding to ensure that group homes comply with the new fire code regulations and to help community agencies recruit and retain qualified staff.

The government's ongoing focus on community living has resulted in a system that now supports more than 48,000 people with developmental disabilities in their communities.

Let me stress that the success that has been achieved in community living has only been possible because of the commitment and effort of community agencies that have worked hard to ensure the supports would be in place.

1420

Despite the achievements and advances of the past several years, the demand for services continues to grow and there is increasing demand for more flexible, responsive kinds of services. The government recognizes that the service providers are struggling to meet these demands and that this is placing a greater burden on the sector at a time when agencies already have trouble getting and keeping qualified staff. The funding announced in last week's budget is the government's response to the concerns it has heard in discussions with individuals, families, agencies and provincial organizations over the past year. With this new investment, the

government is building on the progress that has been made and taking huge steps forward to improving the lives of people with developmental disabilities across the province.

I'd like to reiterate this government's appreciation for the people who work with developmental services in Ontario. It is a workforce that is professional, dedicated and capable. I would also like to acknowledge the families of people with developmental disabilities and their unwavering commitment to their loved ones. Working together, we are creating a province where all people with developmental disabilities can live healthy, productive lives in their own communities.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** I'm very proud and honoured to rise today on behalf of Dalton McGuinty, my leader, and the members of the Ontario Liberal caucus to speak on this unanimous consent motion and to offer our enthusiastic support in recognizing May 15 as Community Living Day in Ontario.

I would first of all take the opportunity to welcome the many distinguished guests from the Ontario Association for Community Living and member associations from across the province who join us today. I understand that well over 100 representatives, including clients, board members, managers, caregivers and friends, are with us here to celebrate Community Living Day at Queen's Park. We thank you.

Today is more than just an opportunity for us as legislators to honour and celebrate the accomplishments of an organization that has worked for over 50 years to bring communities and people together. The work it does now in more than 100 communities across Ontario is surely worth recognizing 365 days a year.

Today is also more than a chance for us to recognize the dedicated staff and caregivers who, day in and day out, provide opportunity, hope and friendship to persons with intellectual disabilities. The tremendous dedicated work they do, which often seems undervalued and unheralded, is truly priceless.

Today is a day when we can truly look at the concept of community living, what it implies and what it means. To me, community living is a rallying cry that continues to resonate in community after community in the lives of persons with disabilities right across this province. In many ways it's a cry for help. It's a plea for dignity, independence and inclusion. It is a constant battle for fairness, for equality, and for recognition.

Community living is what we as legislators should be pushing and fighting for each and every day for the more than 1.5 Ontarians with disabilities. The right to citizenship and participation that we all take for granted is often denied to those who can't fend for themselves. Community living is about giving the best supports we can to families and parents of children and adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities who struggle every day to break down barriers, to overcome prejudices, and are in a constant struggle to find needed

services. Community living is truly what the Ontario Association for Community Living is all about.

For my brother Mark, who lives independently thanks to the wonderful staff at the Lakehead Association for Community Living located in my Thunder Bay riding, and to all the brothers and sisters and sons and daughters who you have in your care, we thank you with all our hearts. The Ontario Association for Community Living not only started the movement 50-plus years ago; it has changed and shaped our society for the better.

I'm pleased to hear the member opposite speak so strongly in support of Community Living Day here in Ontario. While disagreements between my party and hers perhaps do abound, I will certainly take her at her word that she's committed to continue the fight for community living, and the rallying cry of what it means, at the Tory caucus table. Perhaps she can start by standing in her place and asking the Premier to fulfill a promise made six long years ago, a promise that would make a huge difference in the fight for equality and fairness for Ontarians with disabilities. I'm referring, of course, to this government's failure to bring forward and enact a real and meaningful Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Community living is about inclusion. Without real legislative protection, the hopes and dreams of many Ontarians will be left unrealized, unfulfilled and untapped. My leader, Dalton McGuinty, and our disabilities critic, the member for Prince Edward-Hastings, and indeed all the members on this side of the House will not rest until this government recognizes that an Ontarians with Disabilities Act is about human rights, removing barriers and overcoming obstacles. It certainly is more than the legislation that's been brought forward in this House so far. We need a real and meaningful Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

I would also like to suggest to this member that she should be going back to her caucus to inquire as to why the government continues to ignore the fact that costs of living have gone up everywhere. Shelter, food, clothing, utilities: an undeniable fact of life is that everything costs more, yet despite the absolute fact that things cost more, the government has failed to build in even a fair cost-of-living increase to the Ontario disabilities support program, freezing benefits at 1987 levels.

Independent living does come with a cost. Ontarians with disabilities rely on the supports given to them through the Ontario disabilities support program. Real dignity comes with having the means to get by, to live and to participate in meaningful ways. So I say to the member opposite, for the sake of all those about whom you've spoken today, please raise the ODSP benefits to an adequate level so that independent living truly can mean dignified living.

We need to recognize there was a budgetary increase in last week's budget. I would like to say one thing: was last week's news of a budgetary increase to the sector appreciated? Yes, it was. Was it enough? Absolutely not. By their own estimates, the Ontario Association for Community Living has requested an annual increase of

\$220 million to meet critical needs in this sector. After nearly 10 years of flatlined support, it was and is clear that nothing short of significant investment in this sector would serve to address ongoing inequities, lack of services and supports for families, and the growing list of people waiting for services. This government began the process, but I don't believe they had the courage to go far enough.

One of the most pressing challenges facing the entire developmental services sector, including the six cross-sectional associations that make up the alliance of agencies serving children and youth, is the alarming lack of support given to caregivers and staff.

Despite repeated calls and information about how it is becoming more and more difficult to attract and keep qualified staff, despite the reality of how staff turnover is threatening the continuum of care and how positions are being left unfilled and services disrupted, this government responded last year with a budgetary increase that in the end allowed for less than a 1% increase in the developmental services sector for staff, while the broader public sector was given 2%. It's certainly an interesting message to send to this sector.

Further to that, the government must truly be made to recognize the extraordinary level of individual and family needs that are not being met. I have heard personally from dozens and dozens of families desperate to find community placements for their sons and daughters. I've heard from mothers and fathers from all across Ontario who are in near tears as they recount their struggles to find supports for their loved ones. I've heard from aging parents, some of whom are very ill, unable to get the supports they need to secure a place for their child's future.

I've heard from parents who were forced to give up their child with disabilities because this government refused to enter into and fund special-needs agreements between them and agencies like our associations for community living.

We need an adequately funded, multi-accessible system of community supports that is diverse, responsive and reflective of the needs of people with developmental disabilities. That means restoring funds and introducing greater flexibility in order to meet special needs in our schools. It means ensuring the availability of day programs for people with disabilities once they've left the education system. It means continuing the process of moving people from institutional care into supportive community environments. It means recognizing the challenges faced by home share families who are struggling with the day-to-day costs of providing support. It means moving single parents of children with disabilities off the welfare system, where many find themselves, and into a system where they can live with dignity.

There is little doubt that the challenges in the developmental services sector are many and that the obstacles are great. However, with courage and conviction, I would like to envision a day when government support to this

sector is defined not by political need but by the actual needs of those in our communities; in other words, the funding meeting the needs, rather than the needs meeting the funding.

In the spirit of all that we honour here today and as part of this month-long celebration of community living, I would truly ask that this government commit to work toward that end. Consult with the Ontario Association for Community Living, its workers and other agencies that provide vital support to people with disabilities, to determine where new dollars to the sector would most fairly and effectively be used.

**1430**

I also challenge the government today to please commit to rescinding the offensively titled Homes for Retarded Persons Act, which is still on the Ontario law books. When you consider all the gains that have been made, all the pain and stigmatization that people with disabilities have suffered over the years, surely all we are standing up for today deserves better than this.

I conclude with an appeal that all members of the Legislature take time to read a book entitled *What Came First, The Chicken or the Egg?*, a true-life account of three families' struggles to build a home for their adult children with disabilities, which was published through the Toronto Association for Community Living. Reading first-hand the fights and struggles that working families had to go through to get services for their children gives a greater understanding of what community living is truly about.

To the Ontario Association for Community Living, its member associations, its clients, its staff and caregivers, this day is for you. Thank you.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** On behalf of the NDP caucus, it's my pleasure to acknowledge our support for Community Living Day at Queen's Park. I want to commend the members of the Ontario Association for Community Living for lobbying all three political parties to recognize this day. We welcome our guests here this afternoon.

We would also like to thank all those municipalities that are making May Community Awareness Month and holding celebrations for awareness of community living.

I have some remarks which are non-partisan, but in light of the comments made by the parliamentary assistant, I really feel I am compelled to place on the record the following facts with respect to this government's funding of this important sector. The facts I refer to come directly from a brief that was provided to us by the Ontario Association for Community Living in the lead-up to the 2001 provincial budget. I would like to raise three facts, and these are from the association.

One, while the government has provided some new funding over the past two years for additional services, funding for existing services has fallen 6.5% below the level it was at in 1991.

Two, the cost of delivering these existing services has risen, due both to normal cost-of-living factors and uncontrollable costs, such as escalating worker safety

insurance premiums—increases of up to 400% in some cases—and to pay equity, which are not covered by the government. We know this government has jurisdiction with respect to WSIB and its premiums, and they could be doing something about that. We also know this is a government that cancelled pay equity in 1996, pay equity that was going to some of the lowest paid workers in Ontario, particularly those who work for associations for community living. When the court overturned that decision, this government then went in and capped pay equity at December 1998 levels. This government shows its respect for workers by capping pay equity and by forcing associations for community living to fundraise to pay these benefits to these workers.

Three, eroded funding for existing services and the failure to fund new operational costs have left providers and families much worse off than 10 years ago.

I say to the parliamentary assistant, with all due respect, that's your government's legacy to date. With respect to the amount of money that was announced in the budget, I say it's about time, because your government has surely underfunded this important sector over the last six years.

On to my non-partisan remarks: Proclaiming Community Living Day challenges us as MPPs to use our influence as opposition and government members to give real meaning to the desire and ability of people with intellectual disabilities to live as integral members of our communities. That means, firstly, firmly supporting government policy, adopted by the Ministry of Community and Social Services in 1987 and accepted by all three political parties, to close institutions which house Ontarians with intellectual disabilities and repatriate them into our communities.

There are over 1,100 vulnerable adults who still live in three institutions in Ontario, and we must agree that they will all be repatriated by the middle of this decade. While that means having the community services and supports in place to assist many individuals who may well need continuous care, that care ought to be available as part and parcel of a community versus an institutional setting.

Individuals with intellectual disabilities must be part of, not apart from, our neighbourhoods, new neighbours and new friends.

Secondly, it means guaranteeing aging parents, who long ago chose to raise their child, now adult, at home versus placing their son or daughter in an institution, that there is a safe, secure residential placement or supportive housing unit for that same daughter or son to move into soon. The stress on aging families is enormous, and they need to see some movement to reduce the waiting lists, not just movement whereby a space becomes available for an individual with an intellectual disability because their caregiver has died or is hospitalized. Parents also need to know, as they wait for supportive housing to come on stream or residential placements to become available, that their quality of life will not be diminished because of a reduction of in-home support for their adult sons and daughters.

Aging families need more, not less, support. And they need to be able to receive appropriate and necessary support so that they are never put in a position of second-guessing the decision they made to keep a child, now adult, at home.

Thirdly, it involves recognizing the incredible work done by caregivers—front-line staff workers or family members—and compensating them accordingly. The quality of those already in residential placements or supportive housing, those who are waiting to be placed, of the children supported at integrated schools or child care centres, of adults utilizing day programs, of adults being supported in employment programs is directly related to the skills, the commitment and the morale of those meeting the diverse needs of some of Ontario's most vulnerable adults.

But when front-line staff work day after day for wages that are 25% less than their counterparts in institutions or other public service agencies, sooner or later they do get the message that their work is grossly undervalued and likely to remain the same. So despite their loyalty to the intellectually challenged, they move to other work where they can make financial ends meet and actually get some satisfaction from their skills and the contributions that are being recognized and compensated.

This is what is happening in this sector. The average staff turnover rate is 22%, which is demoralizing for workers, very costly for associations for community living, but most importantly, terribly disruptive and negative for those who really need continuity of care as a starting point for quality care.

If we want capable and committed staff to respond to the needs of intellectually disabled adults, we need to pay front-line workers what they are worth, and that means a whole lot more money than they are now receiving.

Finally, it demands putting in place an Ontarians with Disabilities Act which will truly remove the barriers facing those with intellectual disabilities and allow them to participate fully in all aspects of community life.

I have always felt like I was part of a community, and I suspect most members would feel the same. I don't know what it's like to live outside of or be segregated from the mainstream. I don't want to know what it's like either. No one should be excluded from the community because of a disability. No one should have to live in an institution because of an intellectual disability.

We have an obligation to integrate some of Ontario's most vulnerable citizens into our schools, our workplaces, our recreational facilities, our neighbourhoods. It's the right thing to do. It's what we need to commit to today, on Community Living Day.

## VISITORS

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd just ask the members to welcome a number of students who are visiting Queen's Park today from the Corinth Christian School. Please welcome them.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):**

My question is for the Minister of Education. For the last six days you have failed miserably to defend your government's latest attack on public education.

I've asked you to name one organization or even one individual who might be in support of using public dollars for private elite schools, and you have been unable to produce one name.

I've asked you to explain why, and my colleague has asked you to explain why, tax dollars should go to private schools that don't have certified teachers, don't teach the standardized curriculum and don't participate in standardized tests. You've been unable to offer an explanation in that regard as well.

I've asked you why, at a time when today in Ontario we have parents who together with their children are fundraising for textbooks, you've been able to come up with half a billion dollars for private schools.

My question to you, Minister, is, given your failure to explain to Ontario's working families why you are about to do what you are proposing to do, do you not now agree that you should call this off? Understand that you have seen the light and admit that you've been wrong-headed and that you will no longer proceed with your private school voucher plan.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** As I said to the honourable member yesterday—he obviously didn't do it—all he has to do is look at the calls coming into constituency offices, look at the letters to the editor, look at the calls coming into open line shows and look at the correspondence he himself is getting. If he has any doubts about the support the public has for parental choice, he needs to go no further than his own caucus to ask Michael Bryant, Monte Kwinter and other members of his caucus who have supported recognizing and respecting parental choice on this issue.

**Mr McGuinty:** I want to assure the minister that my caucus is firmly united against private school vouchers.

I want to ask you—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Member take his seat. Stop the clock, please.

Sorry for the interruption. Leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** I want to try to determine exactly what it is that you have to do in your Ontario in order to become a school that qualifies for parents who might be entitled to your private school vouchers. We've been able to determine that the only requirement is that they

complete a form, a copy of which I have in my hand. It's called "Notice of Intention to Operate a Private School."

It's just one page. That's it. It is not an application form. There's no application form required. All you have to do is submit a notice of intention. It asks for basic school information, telephone number, fax number, name of the owner, address, school's enrolment, what type of school, whether or not you plan to subscribe to the Ontario curriculum, and it asks, at the end of the day, for a signature. That, apparently, is all that is required in order to be able to access the \$500 million in private school voucher funding.

I'm just wondering: as the minister who is part of a government which is dedicated to accountability, what kind of accountability exists if the only thing you have to do to access \$500 million in private school voucher funding is to complete this form?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, no one is accessing \$500 million worth of vouchers. Again, the honourable leader loves to misrepresent the policy.

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Education can't say that. I'd ask you to withdraw that.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I withdraw that.

Again, the honourable Leader of the Opposition confuses the policy deliberately here in the House.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister of Education, you can't say that as well. You can't say "deliberately" doing that.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I withdraw.

Again the honourable member is stating the case as he sees it. But what surprises me is that he would stand up and try to say that those independent schools are not accountable to the parents who send their children to them, that those independent schools do not offer quality education.

If the honourable member wants to go to the Ottawa Christian School, Redeemer Christian High School, Metcalfe Christian School in his own riding and tell them he doesn't trust, doesn't like and doesn't respect the quality of education in those schools, he should perhaps tell those constituents of his—

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up.

**Mr McGuinty:** Working families are trying to understand this inconsistency, Madam Minister. You tell us your government is very committed to ensuring that our hospitals are accountable, that our colleges and universities are accountable, that our school boards are accountable, our municipalities are accountable—you're going to pass a law banning any of those organizations running deficits in Ontario. So I was just wondering why, in that context, you are now saying, "Here are 500 million public dollars," when the only requirement to access that funding is to file with your ministry a notice of intention to operate a private school.

Madam Minister, why not admit you have not thought this one through? This has been universally condemned by all those who are supporters of public education and understand its value for all of us. Why do you not admit you have made a terrible misstep? Why not agree now

that the best thing to do is take this entire plan and throw it in the garbage?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I find it rather shocking that the honourable member does not trust his own constituents, those hard-working parents in his own riding that he says he speaks on behalf of, those parents who send their children to École Parsifal, Lycée Claudel, the Ottawa Christian School, the Redeemer Christian High School, the Metcalfe Christian School. The honourable member stands here and tries to say that parents who choose to send their children to those schools are somehow not equipped to make judgments for their children. I find that quite shocking.

I also find it quite shocking from the honourable member that when his own members are prepared, out of the conviction in their hearts, to speak out in favour of this support—when Michael Bryant said, “I can’t suck and blow on this at the same time,” when Monte Kwinter called on the government to act on this—he now disrespects their views on this matter.

**The Speaker:** New question, the leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** My next question is also for the Minister of Education. Madam Minister, it’s become painfully obvious that you are unable to defend your policies. While you are working to abandon public education and invite Ontario parents to abandon public education, we’ve been working very hard on putting together a positive plan that would actually support public education.

An important part of our plan—and this will come as no surprise to you, because we’ve been championing this for quite some time—is that we believe our children should be able to enrol in smaller classes. We think there should be a real and hard cap of 20 on class size from JK through grade 3. We know, as you do, that that will improve learning for our children in that early age group.

You said many times that there is no money available for smaller classes in public education, yet you’ve been able to find \$500 million for private, elite schools. Minister, can you tell working families why elite, private schools are a greater priority for you than lowering class sizes in their children’s public schools?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member likes to say he is in favour of smaller class sizes. But the first piece of legislation that was brought in by this government to tell school boards they couldn’t raise class sizes was Bill 160, and the honourable member voted against it. So there we go. The Liberal Party’s view of a definitive policy stand is: on one day they’re for class size, on the other day they’re not for class size. They voted against the only bill.

The only one having difficulty defending his policies in this Legislature is the honourable member. He goes out and says he’s going to fight this tooth and nail. But then he says to the media, “Oh, well, I’m not ideologically opposed to this. Oh, well, it may be OK to have funding for religious schools. Oh, well, maybe we don’t do it now, but maybe we do it later.” Is that how the

honourable member stands up on a matter of principle and fights tooth and nail?

1450

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, I am not ashamed to say that I will fight tooth and nail for public education for working families. This is very perverse. It would seem to me that’s the kind of statement you should be making. You should be working hard, day in and day out, to reduce class sizes, to restore enthusiasm in our schools, to bring back extracurricular activities. That’s the kind of responsibility you should be taking on.

Let there be no doubt about the stark and stunning contrast between me and my caucus and you, your Premier and this government. You would have Ontario parents abandon public education. We want to improve public education. We have plans to save public education, and therein at the end of the day lies the difference.

I ask you once again: you tell us you’re committed to public education. Prove it. Give us smaller class sizes for Ontario’s working families and their children.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member is again sitting here trying to say his position supports public education. Where was he when the first piece of legislation was brought in by this government that said they had to protect special-needs funding? He was against that legislation.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Minister, take her seat. Come to order. Sorry, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Bill 74 said school boards had to use special-needs money only for special-needs purposes. He voted against that.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Minister, take her seat. The member for Windsor-St Clair, come to order. Sorry again, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** He voted against that legislation that would have protected special-needs and does protect special-needs funding. The only piece of legislation the government has brought in to start saying to boards, “Don’t increase class size,” and he voted against that. We brought in standardized testing. He is against that. We brought in a standardized curriculum. He now wants to water that down. His solution for extracurricular activities was to decrease teacher workload by increasing student workload. That was his commitment. Where was he when we put 360 million new dollars into education—

**The Speaker:** The minister’s time is up, I’m afraid. Final supplementary?

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, it may be painful, but once again I’ll have you revisit the educational status quo in public schools today. We have a crisis in our schools. We have a loss of confidence in the minds of our parents. We have parents and children out there fundraising for textbooks. We have 35,000 children with special needs who can’t get a psychological assessment because we don’t have the necessary funding. That is the state of public education on your watch today in Ontario.

We have a plan to save public education by improving public education. We've talked about it at some length. I put the question to you again: if you are firmly committed to public education, then why won't you invest in smaller classes for Ontario's working families and their children?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We did invest in smaller class sizes. We also backed it up with legislation, which the honourable member opposed. There was \$12.9 billion being spent on public education in 1995. It's now \$13.8 billion and more money in the classroom.

The honourable member likes to talk about his plan. His plan did not do what our education quality reforms are doing: bringing in the new curriculum; testing our students to make sure they are learning it; and a teacher-testing program to make sure all our teachers are getting the supports they need, another initiative the honourable member opposes.

We stand firmly behind public education in this province, because we believe it is very important for the quality of life and our economic prosperity in this province. We also believe in and respect parental choice, both within the public system and outside the public system.

**The Speaker:** New question?

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** My question is to the Minister of Education. Your announcement of the \$3,500 tax credit for individuals to send their kids to private school was a bombshell, and still is a bombshell. I've got to tell you, you surprised a lot of Tory members. You also surprised a lot of Liberal members as well. I have to say that during the 1999 election campaign, M. Harris denounced the idea of publicly funding the 700 or so religious schools and the 35 or so non-denominational private schools.

Minister, I want you to confess today: why is your government breaking that promise to the people of Ontario?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** No one is breaking any campaign promises. I must say to the member from the NDP, at least we know where the NDP stands on education reform; at least they've been consistent in their opposition on many of the quality improvements that we have brought forward.

*Applause.*

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Yes, the Liberals can applaud the NDP, if they like.

We have been very clear about our commitment to the public education system, about the changes that the public education system needed to have done. Those were things we promised the voters, promised the parents of this province: the new curriculum, the standardized testing, teacher testing, a Safe Schools Act for safer classrooms. Those were all things we promised the voters of this province. Those are all things that we are indeed delivering on.

**Mr Marchese:** Madam, you need to check the record. This is what the Premier said: "They"—vouchers—"have never been espoused by me or the Minister of Education,

nor have I seen a suggestion anywhere around the cabinet table, nor do I think it will come as long as I'm Premier."

Then you said the following: "We've been very clear that our goal is a good quality public education, and the estimates of \$300 million needed to fund religious schools would be \$300 million that would come out of the public school system." That's what you said. I didn't say that. It was you, Minister, who said that. What do you have to say to your record?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The government stands by its commitments to public education.

**Mr Marchese:** Minister, I want to be clear, because you said, "I'm clear on our position," and then I read your position and you've got nothing to say. I'm going to be here every day asking you the same question until you confess.

I'm inviting you to come to our summit this Thursday at 6 o'clock at Queen's Park to account for your flip-flop, and I'm inviting the Liberals to account for theirs. M. Kennedy, the education critic, said, "The Liberals say it's an issue of fairness. Private schools do have to be funded but in a way that doesn't hurt public schools."

I invite you, Minister, I invite the Premier, I invite M. McGuinty, I invite M. Kennedy to come and account for your flip-floppery. Please come, because I've got to say, the people who care—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of order, Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to allow the NDP to move their seats to that side of the House so they can be closer to the government. You ought to be ashamed—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** OK, folks, we've had our fun for today. Now I'm going to start naming people. We're not going to waste time with points of order like that. We've had our fun. It's getting noisy. You're all on warning now. I'm going to start to throw people out, so you'd better behave if you want to remain here this afternoon.

Final supplementary.

**Mr Marchese:** Mr Duncan, I think you have the same position as they do. That's the problem. That's why we invite you to come, with people who care about our public schools who are joining today with New Democrats, to the summit this Thursday at 6 o'clock to defend public education—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The member take his seat. The member for Hamilton East, his last warning. Sorry for the interruption.

**Mr Marchese:** We invite everyone to come this Thursday at the summit the New Democrats have called here at Queen's Park at 6 o'clock. We invite the Liberals—McGuinty and their critic, M. Kennedy—and we invite you, Madam, and the Premier to come and account for your flip-flop. Will you come?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The vision of all three parties with duelling pistols at dawn—or sunset, as the case may be—does give one cause for concern here.

The Minister of Education and this government are very happy to confess: to confess to a commitment for public education that has protected money in the classroom, to confess to increasing money for the public education system, over \$316 million just this year alone for our school boards, our schools, our parents, our children in the public education system.

Yes, we confess to giving parents more choice within the public system. Yes, we confess to bringing in higher standards so our students can learn what they need to learn. Yes, we confess to having standardized testing to make sure our students can learn that. If he's asking for a confession as to my commitment and the commitment of my caucus to the public education system, we are very happy to say yes.

**The Speaker:** The minister's time is up.

1500

#### PLEA BARGAINING

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I've got a question to the Attorney General. A 17-year-old boy, Jeffrey Fleeton, was struck dead by a truck with an illegal, oversized load. Now the company operating that truck is about to be let off scot-free by one of your provincial prosecutors. The charge, you see, is going to be withdrawn: no trial, no conviction, no jail time, no fine, no record, nothing but a \$2,000 donation to a charity for which the company will probably get a tax receipt.

Minister, please tell this House and Jeffrey Fleeton's parents what steps you're going to take today to prevent this outrageous miscarriage of justice scheduled for tomorrow.

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** Let me say at the outset that we're all saddened by what was indeed a great tragedy. My thoughts and, I'm sure, the thoughts of all members of this assembly are with the family and their friends. Having said that, this matter is before the courts. In the circumstances, I am simply not in a position to comment further upon it.

**Mr Kormos:** His family doesn't want the minister's sympathy. His family wants this government's action. You see, two weeks ago this government with great pride said that it's cracking down on criminals, that it's going to make our streets safer for Ontarians. It wasn't safe for Jeffrey Fleeton, a 17-year-old boy out there working at a summer job. You're the Attorney General. This is your provincial prosecutor who has made a decision to plea bargain away a charge where the death of a 17-year-old boy ensued, to plea bargain it away so there isn't even a conviction, isn't even a record—a \$2,000 donation.

It's your job to supervise your prosecutors. I'm calling upon you today, on behalf of all Ontarians, on behalf of justice, for you to intervene and tell your provincial prosecutor to cancel that plea bargain, prosecute that case

to the fullest and seek the maximum penalty. A dead 17-year-old boy and his family deserve that much.

**Hon Mr Young:** For about 130 years in this province, we have had a tradition; we have constitutional guarantees; we have responsibilities for this Legislative Assembly; we have responsibilities for the courts. There are restrictions that are placed upon me and that have been placed upon Attorneys General before me. My friend opposite has the right to raise issues in the Legislature, as he does. Given the traditions that have developed, the safeguards that are in place, I am not in a position to comment any further at this time.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Health. You will be familiar with a recent KPMG report prepared for the city of Ottawa addressing the hospital funding issue. The report confirms what the hospitals in Ottawa have been telling us for some time, and that is that they have to contend with a funding inequity. I'll quote from the report. It says, "The inequities in funding are costing Ottawa hospitals between \$50 million and \$70 million per year." Minister, my question is very simple and very direct on behalf of hospitals in the Ottawa area: what are you going to do to address this funding inequity?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I can tell the honourable member that we have received this report, which was of course commissioned by the city of Ottawa, and are reviewing it for any legitimate findings that are found in the report. If the honourable member wants to know what we're doing, I can report to this House, as maybe the honourable member well knows, that since the 1995-96 fiscal year, funding to hospitals in Ottawa has gone from \$587,765,607 to \$714,146,622, an increase of 22%.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, if you think you are fulfilling your responsibilities by citing financial data, I would ask you to speak to patients and their families living in the Ottawa area, because they will tell you they've got to contend with longer waiting lists than ever before. They've got to contend with shorter stays in hospitals than ever before. They've got to contend with fewer hospital beds than ever before. They hear stuff about your primary care reform, but that has yet to materialize. That's the experience on the ground.

I'll ask you once more. We have a report now confirming what we've always known, that there is a funding inequity when it comes to your treatment of Ottawa hospitals. On behalf of Ottawa hospitals, on behalf of working families who rely on Ottawa hospitals, what specifically are you going to do, and when are you going to do it when it comes to addressing this funding inequity?

**Hon Mr Clement:** I can say this: we are still trying to track down where the report's information comes from, because it is not related to any information we have. It was a report commissioned by the city of Ottawa. The

Ottawa mayor, Bob Chiarelli, might know something about where some of these numbers come from. They don't come from Ministry of Health data or data from the hospitals, so from that perspective I'm at a bit of a loss to respond to numbers that don't seem to match with the published accounts of the government of Ontario.

I can tell the honourable member that from 1995-96 to the fiscal year just ending, the increase to the city of Ottawa hospitals was \$126,381,015 of taxpayers' hard-earned money for the care that we find on hospital campuses, that is needed on hospital campuses. We have been there for Ottawa hospitals just as we have been there for hospitals throughout Ontario because that is the locus of patient care. We are there; the hospital funding is up. We are concerned about sustainability of the health care system which, if the honourable member has any thoughts on, we'd be happy to share—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

#### YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Summer is approaching, and that means many of Ontario's young people are looking for jobs to help pay their way through school. Many will be able to find jobs at one of Ontario's premier tourist attractions or at theme parks or restaurants in their hometowns. However, there are many other young people who are looking for something more.

I understand that you were part of an announcement last week that will give young Ontarians the opportunity to try their hand at running their own businesses this summer. Minister, could you please explain why this program is important and what our government has committed to it?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** I want to thank the member for York North for the question. Last week, along with representatives from the Royal Bank and Junior Achievement, we officially launched Ontario's young entrepreneurs strategy. The strategy was created to encourage entrepreneurship as a career choice and to provide young people with business training, mentoring and financial help to start up their own businesses.

Our government has committed \$15 million over four years to this program. We feel that giving our young people a chance to learn about being in business and helping them get a new business successfully up and running is a smart and sensible investment in the future of the province.

**Mrs Munro:** I thank the minister for his answer. Minister, young people are the future of this province, and I'm pleased to hear that our government is ready to give them a chance to try something new. Opportunities like this can make a huge difference in a young person's life.

You stated that you have committed \$15 million to this program. Could you please explain exactly how this money will be spent and how the program is going to teach our youth about the benefits of being their own boss?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** The strategy has three different components and will reach 2.5 million students and their parents. The first component, future entrepreneurs, is a program for the classroom that introduces the idea of entrepreneurship to grade 7 and 8 students. The second component, Summer Company, provides hands-on business training and mentoring, along with awards of up to \$3,000, for 15- to 29-year-olds to help them start up a summer business. Finally, the third component, My Company, is a partnership with the Royal Bank that combines hands-on business training and low-interest loans up to \$15,000 to help 18- to 29-year-olds start up their own permanent businesses.

1510

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** My question is for the Minister of Education. Yesterday, the Premier was asked about the private school voucher. He was asked why he was doing this private school voucher. He suggested it was a sense of fairness, that the issue was one of fairness. He suggested it was unfair to pay for a system you don't use.

I'd like to know if you, as the Minister of Education, stand by these remarks of your Premier, when I, who don't have children, and many people like me who don't have children, pay education taxes and have for a long time. I'm going to surmise, then, that I too will be getting a tax credit. Is that the case?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I would like to congratulate the honourable member for her support of hospitals, schools and roads by paying her taxes. We do respect her choice by giving back some of her taxes. You have a tax cut. You have the choice about where you want to spend that money according to your own priorities, according to what you believe is in the best interests of your family. We respect that with taxpayers. We respect that with parents in terms of parental choice.

You as a party have talked about the need for parental choice in the public system. We agree with that. But we also think you need to respect parental choice: those who may wish to go to independent schools, who may wish to go to schools that more closely reflect their religious or cultural values.

**Mrs Pupatello:** That's exactly the point: you have taken \$1.8 billion out of the public education system since you took office, and now you're turning over \$500 million to a private school voucher system that all children cannot benefit from. I am telling you, Minister, on behalf of most of the people in Ontario—whether we pay taxes or don't pay taxes, what systems we support or don't support—that all of us agree, as Canadians, that the

basic tenet of good public policy is that it's not about who's paying but that all of us can benefit from that good public policy.

You have not thought through this policy. The Premier says one thing. The Minister of Education says another. Your own caucus members are surprised to find elements of a private school voucher in a budget document. I ask you again: is this a matter of fairness? If it is, this is going down a road that you owed the people of Ontario that question when they went to the ballot box in 1999 and did not ask this most significant question. I suggest that you go back to the drawing board, because this is not a question of fairness.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I don't know where else the honourable member would expect to find a government statement of tax policy but in the budget. That's where you usually put these things.

Secondly, she can misinterpret or misconstrue what the Premier is saying, because that's not what he said. He is committed to the public system. He is committed to excellence in the public system. That is very clear.

Thirdly, in 1995 we were spending \$12.9 billion on the public education system. Today we are going to be spending \$13.8 billion. That's an increase. To the honourable member, even in the Liberal new math, that is an increase for our public education system, support that system very much needs.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is also for the Minister of Education. Last week, after years of consultation with stakeholders, the government made a very responsible announcement about accountability for our educational system. We introduced a new concept to the Liberals: parental choice. They're having some problems with it.

I have received numerous calls and e-mails from constituents in the riding of Durham and elsewhere, people like Dirk Mostert, Leonard and Theresa Corvers, Barry Thompson, Harry Salomons, Linda Jansma and Carla Witvoet, to name a few. I have been hearing from hard-working families who have struggled to provide this type of education for their children. In much of what I have heard, there seem to be four common themes: choice, quality, accountability and fairness.

Minister, would you please tell not just parents in my riding but all the parents of Ontario about the advantages they will have with the decision made by this government?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** To the list of people who support this initiative we can add Monte Kwinter, Michael Bryant, and obviously today Gerard Kennedy. Thank you very much.

This initiative is about supporting parental choice. I know the honourable members across the way in the opposition like to say that somehow or other this is something that's supporting the elite. Far from it. We have many letters and comments from people who talk about the hardship for middle-class parents who may wish to make this choice. Frankly, in more than 95% of the independent schools that belong to the Ontario

Federation of Independent Schools, the students are the children of ordinary middle-class, hard-working Ontario families. We support parental choice here in Ontario, just like other provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec, Manitoba. This is not a revolutionary concept. This is something that helps support parental choice, in making choices they believe are in the best interests of their children.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The minister's time is up. Supplementary?

**Mr O'Toole:** Thank you for that very comprehensive response, Minister. It's becoming much clearer, hopefully, on the other side. As you've said, other supporters agree that this decision will help hard-working families in our communities who want a clear choice in educating their children. Will you please tell not just me but other members in the House how this decision will help parents and students ensure they receive the best possible education, whether they attend an independent school, like Knox Christian School in my riding, or any public school in Ontario?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I agree with the honourable member that not only do we have many excellent public schools in this province with teachers who are very committed and go above and beyond for the children in this system, but we also have independent schools, in my riding, in his riding, in the ridings of the members opposite, that are also very excellent schools.

We believe we have a track record that shows we are committed to excellence in education for our children. That's why we have taken the steps we've taken in the public education system to strengthen the curriculum, to bring in a Safe Schools Act, to bring in legislation that prevents school boards from using money in places where they shouldn't take classroom dollars. All of those are steps we have taken because of a commitment to public education: more money, new money, new investments in the classroom because we know they are needed to make sure our children get the best education possible.

## TRANSIT SERVICES

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** I have a question for the Minister of Transportation. We have an emergency situation facing our public transit system in Toronto. Brian Ashton, chair of the TTC, warns that the system that more than a million people depend on every day will see major cuts to subway and streetcar services. We're talking about cuts to the very heart of the system. The NDP has put forward a solution called the transportation trust fund. It is a dedicated fund that takes two cents out of the existing gas tax to provide \$180 million a year for transit and \$120 million for local road repairs. Minister, will you support our transportation trust fund?

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** What's startling about the question is that she's giving absolutely no credit to this government in terms of its commitment to transit in Ontario. If you go back, we

have given the city of Toronto \$829 million for a subway. We increased it by \$50 million to \$879 million. We added \$250 million just recently into regional transit, and we've invested \$500 million and convinced the federal government and the city of Toronto to equal that for transit. Quite clearly this government is committed and will continue to be committed to transit. We want to get on with these developments.

**Ms Churley:** That was a disingenuous answer. This government has totally withdrawn from transit and local road supports in Ontario. Toronto is the only jurisdiction in North America that does not get operating funds from a government. In this budget—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Member take her seat. Stop the clock. The member for Scarborough East, this is his last warning as well. I'm not going to put up with the continued yelling across. I've yelled order a couple of times. Sorry for the interruption.

1520

**Ms Churley:** In this budget, your government gave the TTC the back of your hand once again. You provided not one red cent for our subways, our streetcars and our buses, yet you've got funding for seven new expressways elsewhere in the province.

Minister, I'm going to ask you again. We have a solution that the TTC likes and others like. It's a good solution. It is a viable solution: take two cents out of the existing gas tax and provide that funding, dedicated funding—every year it's there, and they can depend on it. Will you commit to funding the TTC here in Toronto today?

**Hon Mr Clark:** I thank the member for the question again. She still doesn't get it. This government has spent \$829 million on the Sheppard subway line. We committed to paying 75% for that subway line and we included up to \$50 million more. So we're now at \$879 million for the Sheppard subway run. On top of that, we have \$500 million for the waterfront projects. On top of that, we just included \$250 million for interregional transit.

The member doesn't understand it. Maybe she should listen to Minister Collenette, who stated, "It's not just about public transit. It's about long-term planning of how we develop and use our land. That's why we need to approach this together," which we're doing, with Smart Growth.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FINANCING

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** My question is to the new Minister of Transportation as well. In the wake of last week's budget, I would like you to clarify why your government is really not honouring its commitment to the roadways in our particular area as well. I would like to remind the minister that 250 miles from here is a fast-growing community, the fastest growing in Canada over the last decade, and the fourth-largest

community in Canada. There is no appropriate funding in the budget that deals with the massive infrastructure needs in the city of Ottawa.

When you look at the budget, it almost completely avoids any responsibility. The budget says, "The government will examine the options and timing for widening ... of Highway 417." Then, "The government will also use this investment to cost-share other projects determined in consultation with the city of Ottawa." This is code for delaying and deferring. We are looking for commitment, not cost-sharing on provincial projects, not studies, not options and not consultations.

Minister, can you explain to the people of Ottawa why this growing contributor to the coffers of the province is getting proportionately less and less of a contribution to address its infrastructure needs?

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** I thank the member for Ottawa Centre for the question. Quite clearly in the budget we announced \$250 million, which was a part of the SuperBuild Millennium Partnerships initiative; \$70 million of that was addressing Ottawa's issues.

It's important for the member also to remember that since 1995 we have invested \$500 million in the Ottawa area. The member, when he starts to talk about a number of the planning issues that are underway—and I understand that the mayor of Ottawa believes he should simply be able to point to an area out there and say, "Build a road there." We don't do that over here.

What we have underway right now are a number of needs assessments for a number of portions of the highways. We're now looking at the Ottawa ring road and we're co-operating with the city of Ottawa on that particular project. We're looking at two different studies that are already underway looking at operational design for the extension of Highway 417. Quite clearly, the mayor doesn't understand that you have to design the highway before—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The minister's time is up.

**Mr Patten:** I would suggest that the new Minister of Transportation take a look at the wording in the budget, because it says "Up to \$70 million" and it says "to cost-share," and that usually means that you put in your 50%, we claim the whole amount and call it \$70 million, and then you call upon the city to put in \$35 million that they don't have because you removed the commitment to fund them in the amalgamation for over \$100 million.

We're talking about a very fast-growing city, one that contributes to the coffers of this particular province. The ring road has been messed around with for eight years. It is not a priority for the city. The expansion of the highway is, yes. There are a number of things. The city is ready to move right now. You've got all the studies, all the things you need to do. All this means, and what you're saying, is deferring, delaying. Maybe by the year 2005 you might have some kind of a contribution in this. You don't even have an agreement with the federal government on their infrastructure arrangement to be able

to get some resources to put in this area. Are you going to take some particular action and do it now?

**Hon Mr Clark:** I thank the member for the question. Maybe he doesn't think there's a need for the ring road, but we believe there's a need to not only assess it, but to get on with it.

Quite ironically, I met with Minister Collenette, not a couple of weeks ago. I sat down talking to him specifically about some of the issues in Ottawa and across the province, and how we work together to develop non-partisan, tri-governmental partnerships. The minister has stated himself that the amount of money that the federal government is putting into transportation is a drop in the bucket. He has committed to working with me and with the municipalities to develop these tri-governmental proposals and partnerships. We're anticipating very clearly he will be at the table. We're also anticipating that the municipalities will be at the table.

It's sad that in Ottawa the mayor is more interested in throwing rhetoric around and pointing fingers and trying to aggravate things as opposed to sitting down. When I sat down with the mayor, I asked him to work with me on these projects. He has never called me. He has never picked up the phone. I asked him to work with me. He didn't do it, but Minister Collenette is working with this government.

#### ELECTRONIC MONITORING

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** My question today is for the Minister of Correctional Services. Minister, as part of our government's ongoing commitment to making communities safer, the Mike Harris government announced in the budget that \$2 million has been allocated to your ministry for electronic monitoring of offenders who are serving their sentences in the communities.

I am aware that electronic monitoring allows us to increase public safety by monitoring offenders in the community and holds them accountable for their actions. Can you tell us more about electronic monitoring and the types of offenders who would qualify for this particular program?

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services):** To my colleague from Simcoe North, I want to start off by saying electronic monitoring is just one of the tools that we use in corrections to help us better control and monitor individuals who are either released from institutions under a temporary release program or released from institutions as a result of a parole program or sentenced by the courts directly to community-type sentencing. It's just one of the many tools that we put in the hands of probation and parole officers and institutional managers to make sure that we have a full and comprehensive ability to manage and track these individuals and to apply what the courts have asked us to apply as it relates to any particular type of community incarceration to these individuals throughout their com-

munity sentence or, as I say, as a result of some institutional release program.

**Mr Dunlop:** Thank you for that response, Minister. Yesterday I read in the Toronto Star that you are looking at other types of technology and planning on expanding the use of electronic monitoring with a private partner.

Can you tell us why you need to look at other technology than the devices you are currently using, and if they are indeed effective or not?

**Hon Mr Sampson:** We started the electronic monitoring program in 1995, using the technology that was available then, and we've used it as extensively as we possibly could. But of course the way technology has gone over the last while, it has developed. There are other types of technologies that can be used to help us apply a full range of monitoring to the individuals released to community sentences or, as I said, released in some way or another from institutions. So we're taking a look at these technologies. They are in fact being used in other jurisdictions around this world quite effectively to help, again, properly equip probation and parole officers with the full range of tools so that we know where these individuals are when they are released to communities, and we know on a regular basis how we can get in touch with them should we have to do that. We'll look at the full range of technology. It's something we should do, and we will be doing it.

1530

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, my office has received letters and calls from municipalities across Algoma-Manitoulin: for example, the town of Espanola, Gordon township, Northeastern Manitoulin and The Islands, the township of Baldwin, Assiginack, the township of Central Manitoulin, the township of Sables-Spanish Rivers, the township of Nairn and Hyman and many others. Each of these communities has the same problem: a significant budget shortfall as a result of your government's downloading. You've created an extra level of government in northern Ontario with the DSSABs, and now they are billing municipalities to pay for downloaded services such as land ambulance, social services and social housing.

Can you stand here today and assure the communities in my constituency that you will increase the community reinvestment fund to offset the increases faced as a result of your government's downloading?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I appreciate the question because that term has been used quite a bit in the media. I think the honourable member would know that there was a trade that took place because municipalities asked for some stability around their property tax base. Education each year on average went up about 10%. They asked for that to be stopped because that eroded their ability to plan and

predict for hard services. We did that. It was a \$2.5-billion trade, uploading half the cost of residential plus the children's aid; these are uploaded costs.

What went to the municipalities were other services that are best handled at the local level. If you want me to review the numbers for your particular municipalities, I'd be more than willing to do that.

**Mr Brown:** The minister knows that what he just said is more fiction than fact.

Minister, I'd like to quote to you the mayor of Northeastern Manitoulin and The Islands, Ken Ferguson, a mayor you probably know very well on your side. He says, "Our community has many seniors and individuals on a fixed income; the added taxation will be too much for many to afford without experiencing significant difficulties in their day-to-day modest lifestyles." He goes on to write, "I am certain that it was never the intent of this province to create a situation where local municipal services were eroded by squeezing provincially mandated services into an already tight municipal tax structure."

Minister, will you stand here and tell Mayor Ferguson and all the other communities of Algoma-Manitoulin that you will adjust the CRF so that these communities do not have to increase their property taxes? Mr Ferguson is telling us that the increases in NEMI will be between 16% and 50%, depending on the ward.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I will undertake to review their numbers. I can tell you that when I was on municipal council, we always felt that at the local level we knew what was going on. We could run things better than Queen's Park. If your councils are saying that with these new services they can't run it as well as Queen's Park did before the trade, I can look into that.

I can tell you that the trades were to the benefit of municipalities, and we can show you the numbers on that. The children's aid alone has gone up dramatically. That is no longer borne on the property tax rate. You can take a look at education; the rate has actually gone down on the residential property tax. It has allowed municipalities more stability and more predictability on their tax base to plan for hard services. That's what AMO and others asked for for a generation. If you want to review those trades, I'd be willing to look at that.

## VICTIMS OF CRIME

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** My question is for the Attorney General. My constituents and I were very surprised to read that CAVEAT, Canadians against violence, will close its doors at the end of the month. In 1991, Nina de Villiers was murdered by a violent offender who was out on bail. This violent offender had a long history of predatory attacks on women. Priscilla de Villiers began a crusade to put justice back into the justice system. She made it her mission to ensure that victims of crime would have a voice in a system that too often considered victims a nuisance. Mrs de Villiers

founded CAVEAT to offer victims a sense of hope and to fight for their right to be heard.

Minister, can you assure this House that CAVEAT's work on behalf of all victims will not have been in vain?

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I would like to thank the member for Scarborough Centre for this question.

This is an opportunity for us to pay tribute to Priscilla de Villiers for all of her tireless work on behalf of victims of crime. She clearly experienced what is undoubtedly a parent's worst nightmare. Yet somehow she found the strength to carry on and work for change. She worked and she made a difference.

The Mike Harris government has always been anxious to work, and has in the past worked, with CAVEAT, and I want to say publicly here that we're committed to continuing to work with victims of crime.

I say to you that we are reviewing her current report—the report from CAVEAT. In fact we are utilizing many portions of it in some initiatives that are coming forward from my ministry.

**Ms Mushinski:** I'd like to thank the minister for that response. I think all members of this House would agree that Priscilla de Villiers has made a positive and important impact on the justice system in Ontario and indeed in Canada.

I for one am very proud that the Mike Harris government has worked hard to change the justice system on behalf of victims. I only wish the federal government would listen to the cries of victims and finally get tough on crime.

Minister, I'm concerned that in the absence of CAVEAT, victims will not have access to programs that support them in their hour of greatest need. Can you assure my constituents of Scarborough Centre that under the Mike Harris government the concerns of victims will not be ignored?

**Hon Mr Young:** I can assure you, Mr Speaker, and indeed the people of Ontario, that the Mike Harris government will continue, as it always has in the past, to firmly stand on the side of victims.

This government has taken action to ensure that victims are treated with respect throughout the justice system and receive the services they require. The Victims' Bill of Rights, proclaimed in 1996, was indeed an important step forward. It acknowledged that there are needs of victims, and it travelled great lengths to addressing those needs. But there was more to do after the passage and proclamation of that bill of rights, and we have done more. In the past fiscal year, 2000-01, we spent approximately \$135 million on in excess of 40 programs that will help and assist victims across this province.

## DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** My question is for the Chair of Management Board. Front-line workers who care for Ontarians who are developmentally disabled

are chronically underpaid, and they want to know what you're going to do about it. The government's own study shows wages and benefits for these workers are seriously out of whack with other social workers. They earn as much as 25% less. Those low wages are feeding huge staff turnover rates as high as 22%. The developmentally disabled deserve dependable, high-quality care. Will you help bring stability back to the system and raise those workers' salaries?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** Our government has listened to people with developmental disabilities and their families, and I can tell you that we certainly have a lot of respect for the courage with which they face these challenges.

They told us that they need more flexible supports to live in the community, and that's why in the May 2001 budget we provided an additional \$55 million in annual funding this year, growing to an annual increase of almost \$200 million over current levels by 2006.

On top of this, we'll help meet demands for new facilities for people with developmental disabilities through an additional five-year, \$67-million commitment toward the construction of new facilities to meet their needs.

We've consulted with this community. Clearly we have a lot of empathy for them and clearly we've come to the table with substantial money in the new budget.

**Mr Martin:** Everybody knows that you're allotting more money to help the developmentally disabled this year, but there's widespread agreement that workers' wage hikes must be a part of that package.

Minister, those workers are here in the gallery today, ready to jump at the chance to meet with you and make a deal. Every year, almost one in four workers leaves the sector because they're underpaid.

Will you help the disabled and their families who depend so much on these workers and hammer out a deal to raise their wages?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I can only hope to point out again to the member that we have a substantial amount of assistance in the budget that was just announced. I would assume that \$55 million, increasing to \$200 million over a period of two years, is substantial funding.

I can only add to this that perhaps I can help with quotes from some of the people in that community. June Chiu, the president, and Agnes Samler, the executive director, of the Toronto Association for Community Living, said, "Minister Flaherty's announcement ... will help us meet the critical and increasing needs of people with an intellectual disability and their families ... above all, we are relieved to see that there is commitment to a multi-year plan for this sector."

It goes on to say, "Once again, we commend you and your government for recognizing and valuing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities."

Clearly these are people who provide in this community, who are very satisfied with the efforts the government has made to address this issue.

1540

#### CLINICAL RESEARCH

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** I have a question for the Minister of Health. You will be aware that media headlines today are celebrating exciting advances in research that will aid in the treatment of breast cancer. At the same time as we join in that celebration, I want to bring to your attention the fact that there is another piece of leading research that could be of enormous benefit to women in this province, in this country and indeed across the world. The research is into a new treatment for fibroids called uterine fibroid embolization. It involves 550 women across Ontario. The study includes seven hospitals and three of our research institutions. It is the world's largest study into an alternative to hysterectomy.

This trial could lead to the kind of alternative treatment that would mean 20,000 women a year in this province do not have to face a hysterectomy. That could mean in turn that 10,000 hospital days could be saved. Yet this research is in danger of being cut off at the clinical trial stage because of a lack of funding.

Minister, I ask you today, will you undertake to find the ways and means to ensure this important clinical research can proceed in the interests of those 20,000 Ontario women a year who could be spared the risks of surgery and the complications of hysterectomy?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I thank the honourable member for the question. I can report to her and to this House that I am aware of the research being done in this area. It is in the early experimental stages at present. I have had a conversation with one of the researchers, as well as with the Women's Health Council, which as you know was appointed by my predecessor to fund, through a \$10-million-per-year funding from the provincial government, initiatives and research in this area. So the discussions are ongoing, but I will take the honourable member's suggestions under advisement.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The time for question period is over.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just before we begin, the members may know that today is the 25th anniversary of the intern program. Jackie Scott, the aunt of one of our interns, Rachel Sheer, is in the public gallery. She is visiting from Castle Acre, Norfolk, England, and we would like to welcome her today.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Davenport has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Citizenship concerning

settlement and integration services and federal-provincial agreements. This matter will be debated today at 6 pm.

### VISITOR

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I'd like to welcome the students from Prince of Wales school in Peterborough. Welcome, guys.

### PETITIONS

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Just before I go to petitions, I want to tell Auntie Jackie that Rachel Sheer is in my office doing an excellent job. So you can go back to England and tell everyone just how professional she really is.

I have a petition to the Ontario Legislature. It's northerners demanding the Harris government eliminate health care apartheid.

"Whereas the northern health travel grant offers a reimbursement of partial travel costs at a rate of 30.4 cents per kilometre one way for northerners forced to travel for cancer care while travel policy for southerners who travel for cancer care features full reimbursement costs for travel, meals and accommodation;

"Whereas a cancer tumour knows no health travel policy or geographic location;

"Whereas a recently released Oracle research poll confirms that 92% of Ontarians support equal health travel funding;

"Whereas northern Ontario residents pay the same amount of taxes and are entitled to the same access to health care and all government services and inherent civil rights as residents living elsewhere in the province; and

"Whereas we support the efforts of ... OSECC (Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care), founded by Gerry Lougheed Jr, former chair of Cancer Care Ontario, Northeast Region, to correct this injustice against northerners travelling for cancer treatment;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, support Gerry Lougheed Jr and petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to fund full travel expenses for northern Ontario cancer patients and eliminate the health care apartheid which exists presently in the province of Ontario."

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 306 people.

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place

to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

#### AIR QUALITY

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Harris government's wholly owned Nanticoke generating station is North America's largest dirty coal-fired electricity producing plant and Ontario's largest producer of the chemicals and acid gases which contribute to deadly smog and acid rain; and

"Whereas the Nanticoke plant, which has more than doubled its dangerous emissions under the Harris government, is now the worst polluter in all of Canada, spewing out over five million kilograms"—that probably should be kilotons, I would think, Mr Speaker—"of toxic chemicals each year, including many cancer-causing chemicals and mercury, a potent and dangerous neurotoxin; and

"Whereas at least 13 Ontario municipalities and seven northeastern US states have expressed concerns that Ontario Power Generation's proposed cleanup plan for Nanticoke is inadequate in protecting the air quality and health and safety of their residents; and

"Whereas the Ontario Medical Association has stated that 1,900 Ontarians die prematurely each year and we pay \$1 billion annually in health-related costs as a result of air pollution; and

"Whereas because the Harris government has now lifted the moratorium on the sale of coal-fired power plants and has set a date for deregulation of electricity, the operator of the Nanticoke plant will likely stoke up production to maximize profits which will only worsen the air quality in cities like Kitchener, Windsor, London, Niagara Falls and St Catharines;

"Be it resolved that the Mike Harris government immediately order that the Nanticoke generating station be converted from dirty coal to cleaner-burning natural gas."

I affix my signature. I'm in agreement.

#### ELECTRICITY GENERATING STATION

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I have pleasure in presenting this petition on behalf of the member for Oakville, Gary Carr, and myself. This is a critical petition with literally thousands of names. It reads as follows, to the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas Sithe Energies Canadian Development Ltd is actively pursuing the development of an 800 MW electricity generating facility;

"Whereas the 14-hectare parcel of land on which the station is proposed is located on the east side of Winston Churchill Boulevard in the Southdown industrial district of Mississauga;

"Whereas Sithe has stated its commitment to an open dialogue with communities where it has a presence and to being responsive to the concerns of the same; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has a responsibility to ensure the safety of Ontario citizens and to determine how this facility will impact those who live in its immediate, surrounding area,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario direct the Ministry of the Environment to undertake a formal environmental assessment of the Sithe project."

This project is in my riding and abuts the riding of Oakville. I have pleasure in signing it in support.

#### SALE OF SCHOOLS

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition which reads as follows:

"Whereas the Hughes Public School at 17 Innes Ave in the city of Toronto closed down and its premises have been declared surplus by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB);

"Whereas the city of Toronto has issued a building permit permitting the reconstruction of Hughes Public School for an entity called Beatrice House...;

"Whereas the Beatrice House is not a private school registered with the Ministry of Education...;

"Whereas within the context of the zoning bylaw ... the subject lands have been designated as R2 Z0.6 and permits a 'private academic, philanthropic or religious school';

"Whereas the TDSB has chosen not to lease the subject premises to a computer training company for \$1.25 million annually. Instead, the board has chosen to lease it to Beatrice House for a fraction of the current market value...;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Honourable Minister of Education investigate the leasing arrangement between the Toronto District School Board and Beatrice House inasmuch as:

"(1) Boards are to seek fair market value when selling, leasing or otherwise disposing of schools...;

"(2) Boards are to offer the property to coterminous boards and other public agencies operating in the area in accordance with the priority order currently specified in regulation 444/98;

"(3) Toronto District School Board has not dealt in good faith with the neighbourhood residents;

"Therefore, we respectfully ask you," as minister, "to reconsider our plea for justice. The Toronto District

School Board has ignored our concerns and has ignored due diligence. We as a community tried everything within our power to fight the glaring and obvious wrong done to us, but to no avail."

Since I'm in agreement with this petition, I'm delighted to sign it as well.

1550

#### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I have a petition from over 300 good citizens of the riding of Cambridge to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas on September 27, 1997, Cambridge was legally designated underserviced, having an insufficient number of family doctors for its citizens; and

"Whereas thousands of men, women and children in Cambridge are not cared for by their own family physician and this unfortunate situation exists in other Ontario communities;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government substantially increase the number of family doctors in Cambridge and other underserviced areas by:

"(1) permitting substantial numbers of qualified and highly competent foreign-trained family doctors the right to practise in Cambridge and other underserviced areas in Ontario; and

"(2) substantially increase the number of available student spaces in Ontario medical schools and require new graduates to serve in Cambridge and other underserviced areas in Ontario."

I affix my name thereto.

#### FRAIS DE TRANSPORT AUX FINS MÉDICALES

**M<sup>me</sup> Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier):** J'ai une pétition à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de la part des gens du nord qui exigent que le gouvernement Harris mette fin à l'apartheid en matière de soins de santé.

« Attendu que, d'une part, le programme de subventions accordées aux résidents du nord de l'Ontario pour frais de transport à des fins médicales offre un remboursement partiel au taux de 30,4 cents par kilomètre à aller seulement, à l'intention des personnes atteintes de cancer, et que, d'autre part, la politique de déplacement pour les gens du sud de l'Ontario rembourse en entier les coûts de transport, de repas et d'hébergement ;

« Attendu qu'une tumeur cancéreuse ne connaît aucune politique de transport pour les soins de santé ni de région géographique ;

« Attendu qu'un sondage de recherche Oracle publiée récemment confirme que 92 % des Ontariens appuient un financement égal de transport à des fins médicales ;

« Attendu que les résidents du nord de l'Ontario paient le même montant d'impôts et ont droit aux mêmes accès

aux soins de santé, ainsi qu'à tous les services du gouvernement et à tous les droits de la personne inhérents que les autres résidents de la province»; et finalement,

« Attendu que nous soutenons les efforts de Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care, une association récemment fondée par Gerry Lougheed, ancien président de Action Cancer Ontario, région du nord-est, afin de redresser cette injustice envers les personnes du nord de l'Ontario qui doivent se déplacer pour recevoir des traitements anticancéreux ;

« En conséquence, il est résolu que les soussignés exigent que le gouvernement Mike Harris propose immédiatement de financer en entier les frais de transport à l'intention des résidents du nord de l'Ontario atteints de cancer et de mettre fin à l'apartheid qui existe présentement dans la province de l'Ontario en matière de soins de santé. »

J'appose ma signature.

#### HORSE RIDING SAFETY

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre):** I have petitions here signed by people from Waterloo, Ontario, Elmira, Dundas, Burlington, Kilbride, Puslinch, Carlisle and Oakville.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas an increasing number of Ontarians are turning to horseback riding as a recreational activity; and

“Whereas many of these inexperienced riders are children; and

“Whereas currently there are no minimum safety standards regulating riding establishments; and

“Whereas coroners’ inquests into horse riding fatalities from as long ago as 1977 have called for the mandatory use of riding helmets and boots; and

“Whereas an unacceptable number of preventable injuries and fatalities have occurred while horseback riding;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to pass into law the private member’s bill introduced by Tina Molinari, MPP for Thornhill, entitled the Horse Riding Safety Act, 2001, in order to increase the safety of horse riders under the age of 18 by requiring the operators of riding establishments to ensure that proper safety equipment is used, and to amend the Highway Traffic Act and make it an offence for any rider under the age of 18 to ride a horse on a highway without the proper safety equipment.”

I am pleased to submit this to the assembly.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas this government is planning a complete overhaul of the developmental services system, which could result in the closure of the three remaining developmentally handicapped regional centres;

“Whereas suitable quality medical, behavioural, social, emotional and spiritual services are readily available in the three remaining centres; and

“Whereas there is a distinct deficiency of services available in the private sector, including dentists, kinesiologists, psychiatrists, physicians, and emergency services;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ask that you recognize that the three remaining centres for developmentally handicapped individuals are providing a community for the residents that live there, and acknowledge that these centres deliver quality care and services by keeping them open and by directing private/public agencies with limited resources and services to access the resources at the centres and to work in partnership with them.”

It's signed by a number of residents from Tilbury, Blenheim and Chatham, and I have signed this petition.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 320 people:

“Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

“Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

“Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible.”

#### PROSTATE CANCER

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This is a petition to the Ontario Legislature:

“Whereas prostate cancer is one of the leading causes of fatal cancer in Ontario;

“Whereas prostate cancer is the second leading cause of fatal cancers for males;

“Whereas early detection is one of the best tools for being victorious in our battle against cancer;

“Whereas the early detection blood test known as PSA (prostate specific antigen) is one of the most effective tests at diagnosing early prostate cancer;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to encourage the Ministry of Health to have this test added to the list of services covered by OHIP, and that this be done immediately in order for us to save lives and beat prostate cancer.”

I affix my signature to this petition.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### 2001 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 10, 2001, on the amendment to the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I appreciate the opportunity to give the leadoff speech in response to the budget on behalf of the NDP caucus.

Let me begin my remarks by taking a look at the economic framework that we have in front of us with which to measure the budget. Just today, I'm sure members will know, especially those on the government side with huge stock portfolios, the federal reserve—well, I've already got O'Toole up on his legs, so it's already a successful speech and I'm not even one minute in—announced that they were cutting interest rates by a further 50 basis points. That's half a percentage.

Some will see that as good news, and the markets may indeed respond short-term as a result of that. But for those who watch the market and watch interest rates and watch what the federal reserve is doing, they will know that an abrupt drop like this, while good news and providing a bit of a jolt to the American economy, particularly the stock market, also suggests very clearly what the federal reserve sees six, nine, 12 months down the road, which of course is what they're looking at. If you accept the notion that markets are reflecting where investors think the economy is going to be in six months, nine months or 12 months, as opposed to where they think it's going to be today or tomorrow, this is horrible news. It suggests that as they look down the road, things are going to get worse. If they didn't, they wouldn't have cut it by as much.

I think it's worth noting that since the beginning of the year there have been five occasions—one of them was a total surprise, the one on April 18; totally unexpected—and again, every one of them was a 50-basis-point drop. That is big. Normally it's 25. Fifty is not the usual, and here we have since the beginning of this year the fifth drop.

Why do I bother raising all of this in the context of the budget? Because one of the first things we have to do is look at the assumptions the government makes, because that's what tells us what they think their revenue is going to be, and then you compare that to what they think their expenditures are going to be and that, in a rough form, tells you whether or not you've got a balanced budget. So for a government that wants and needs to show a balanced budget, one of the ways of giving off that impression is to use assumptions that are, to say the least, a little optimistic. You're looking at 2.2% growth. You've got no wiggle room in this budget if that's not delivered. If we don't get 2.2% growth—and that's why I

mentioned the announcement today—what it suggests is that for the bulk of the time that this budget is going to cover in the fiscal 2001-02, the federal reserve, arguably the single most important entity in determining where the major economies of the world are going, sees bad news, continuing bad news.

As I mentioned, when we started our public hearings in the finance committee on the upcoming budget, we started with a minister, just prior to the opening hearings, talking about growth at over 3%. That got revised. Then we heard, in front of the committee, the economists come in and suggest that things were fairly good and that Ontario should be in a good position to withstand some of the downturn because of the new diversification that we have in Ontario. Again, the government is trying to de-link the negative aspect of the American economy and the potential for the future of our own economy here.

During the course of our public hearings, Nortel did its swan dive and there went the rest of the NASDAQ with it, and the whole tech side was at one point down—I think they're up a little now—over 60% in value. This was the area of the economy this government said was going to save us from a downturn elsewhere. Well, suddenly we start getting revisions and the government starts backpedalling faster than an Olympic racer as they start lowering their expectations.

Now we're at 2.2%. I want to say very clearly that I don't believe you're going to hit 2.2%. You don't even know for sure whether or not we're going to go into a recession—a recession defined by two quarters of negative growth. We're not there yet. I hope we don't go there, but it doesn't look good right now. Today's announcement is bad news for Ontario. What that means is that if this 2.2% doesn't hold, because you've got legislation now that says there has to be to be a balanced budget, the only way it can happen is more cuts.

I'm going to spend some of my time today talking about the cuts and the continuing damage this government is doing to the key quality-of-life factors, such as health care, education, environmental protection and the provision of affordable energy. All of these things are damaged by your budget, and that's based on the 2.2% growth assumption. If that falls, all the other areas and everything I say today is worse in six or eight or 12 months. In order to meet their new arbitrary law that there can't be any kind of a deficit—it doesn't matter how many hospitals are in crisis; it doesn't matter how many schoolrooms are in crisis—that legislation will take priority and you will start slashing even further.

The government has tried to tell us all along that this economic boom we enjoyed, and we did, the longest economic boom in North American history, the longest bull run on the markets in history—this government said they were going to cut taxes and slash spending to pay for it, and that that was going to give us a buoyant economy. Right or wrong, given the kind of economy we had, of course the numbers went up and of course revenue went up. The real test, and we said this all along, is when the economy starts to cool down, because then

the smoke will clear and we'll be left with the facts. The facts are already there now, and the facts show that when the American economy goes up, we go up with it, especially Ontario because of our linkage to the American auto industry, actually the integrated auto industry we have in North America.

Conversely, when that economy cools, we will too. The government said, "No, the American economy has nothing to do with it. It might provide a little bit of influence here and there, but by and large, it's the agenda of the Mike Harris government that's going to make the economy work." The test of that can only be when the American economy cools. That's what is happening now, and what is happening in Ontario? We're getting the cold. It's cooling. If they slip into even borderline recession, we're going to have pneumonia, and all your tax cuts in the world aren't going to make any difference at all. They never did, certainly not to the extent that you're talking about and that you have bragged about.

We, in this caucus, have said that a tax cut in Ontario has absolutely nothing to do with whether somebody who lives in Wisconsin buys a new car, and yet when they buy that new car, our economy benefits because of the integration of the auto industry, because of the Auto Pact, which we've also lost. Now, with that citizen in Wisconsin not buying the auto, your tax cuts mean nothing because there is no demand.

**1610**

While all this is going on on the economic front, we're left with a scorched earth policy in terms of anything that has to do with creating and maintaining the kind of society that has made this one of the best places in the world to live, as decided by the United Nations on a number of occasions.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** I hear muttering from the government benches. I didn't hear it all. If he wants to heckle, he should do it a little louder so at least I can respond. If you mutter, I can't hear you. Now he doesn't want to, so I guess it wasn't that important after all.

Let's take a look at some of the key things—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** Why do you start mumbling as soon as I speak? I give you a chance to heckle and say your bit and you clam up, but as soon as I start up again, you start mumbling. Which is it?

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre):** You didn't say it. Relax.

**Mr Christopherson:** You jump in too and we'll make it two to one. How's that?

Let me deal with a couple of aspects of the budget itself, having outlined the context for this budget and where I think, unfortunately, we're going to be in a few months. What exactly is going to happen, for instance, to our health care system?

The government right off the bat in this budget—we have heard members of the government talk about the fact that they're increasing spending in health care by \$1.2 billion and isn't that wonderful? "We care about

health care. We're going to make sure there's \$1.2 billion invested in health care." Number one, it doesn't meet the need. Yes, you can announce it's a higher number, but the higher number doesn't mean anything if the demand by virtue of inflation—although it's not rampant right now, cumulatively there's a cost—an aging population, meaning more health care, and yes, health care is costing more, and just growth in the population which also places demand—if you don't meet at least those three drivers of costs, then there's not going to be enough money.

What's really insulting about this is that of the \$1.2 billion, \$1.05 billion is federal money. It's not even your money. It's not even money you've made it a priority to spend. It's money the feds gave as a result of the agreement that was reached with the provinces—and believe me, the federal Liberals have a lot to answer for too—and you took that \$1.05 billion and you added \$150 million, which is not a lot of money in the context of this budget; \$150 million is not very much. That's how much of your budget you were prepared to put in health care: \$2.4 billion in tax cuts for corporations and \$150 million for health care, but you stand up and brag about \$1.2 billion and all but \$150 million is not even your money. You just took the money from the feds, put it in the budget, added a little bit of change and said, "We're investing \$1.2 billion." What a scam for a government that talks about wanting to be up front and transparent.

What of that announcement of the \$1.2 billion? It's interesting. The president of the Ontario Hospital Association, Mr David MacKinnon, said this: "'The failure to provide funding for a growing and aging population and other cost pressures will mean real reductions in essential medical services and longer waiting times,' said a visibly angry MacKinnon on budget day."

How does your government respond? "'For too long in this province we have rewarded poor performance by funding hospital deficits each year,' Flaherty said. He promised a much tougher approach in the future to make sure that 'not a penny is misspent.'" Mr MacKinnon called this "sanctimonious rhetoric." You're the one who changed the policy in the first place when deficits weren't allowed. You changed it. Now you want to go back.

What does this mean? In my own community, it means that the deficits we are running in all our hospitals right now, which are about \$48 million—and let me remind the government members that the shortfall for hospitals, as a result of your budget, is \$750 million. There's legislation coming that's going to put in law the fact that hospitals can't run deficits. In Hamilton, we've been through this. We've seen the future. Quite frankly, there are two things that saved our butt. One was there was a phenomenal community campaign around closing the Henderson hospital, which was the plan that was being put forward to deal with the deficit that was created because our board—and I give them full credit; I was very proud of them—said, "We don't have enough money to meet the demands of those Hamiltonians who are coming to our doorstep. We are not going to say no to

them. Therefore, if we have to run a deficit, we will, and we'll try to work that out with the province. But we will meet the demand of Hamiltonians as we see it, as we're faced with it." I support that.

By the way, our school board trustees, in the last term, did exactly the same thing. That's the right thing to do.

The other thing that saved our bacon the last go around was there was a local by-election where you were fighting to save a seat that was open because one of your own members resigned over a different broken promise. By the way, you lost that by-election. But at the end of the day, the only way we saved the Henderson hospital was because the government stepped in and said, "We will cover the deficit." One sentence makes a huge difference. Now they didn't have to find almost \$50 million in cuts just to break even.

What's going to happen with the legislation you're going to bring forward about hospitals is that the same hospital board, faced with the same dilemma, would be required by your law to turn away Hamiltonians who need health care, because the option they chose last time you will have eliminated, which was, "We will meet the health care demands of this community first and we'll deal with the dollars later," in terms of talking to the province.

Some \$750 million in deficits across the province in all our hospitals, and your answer is to bring in a law that says, "No more deficits for hospitals." What about the people who need the health care? What are they supposed to do? What are they supposed to do when they're turned away at the door of one of our hospitals in Hamilton because they don't have the money? You've got \$2.4 billion for another corporate tax cut, but you bring in a law and a budget that's going to turn away Hamiltonians from their own hospitals. How is that helping communities? How is that helping Sudbury, Windsor, Ottawa, Hamilton, Toronto? How? How is that helping health care? The only thing it's helping is you, because it helps make your books look good.

Then what's going to happen? Here's what's going to happen down the road. Anybody who wants to know what's going to happen, watch what happened in Hamilton. The board put together a plan because they were told originally they weren't going to get the money for the deficit. So they put together a plan that dealt with that. That's how we ended up with Henderson hospital on the chopping block to try to offset the deficit. That's going to happen in every single community—most communities; I shouldn't say "every," because I don't know that, but most communities—if not this year, then next or the year after. But eventually they're going to run into a point where they don't have enough money—your underfunding is a chronic problem, regardless of what we're talking about—only now they don't have options. They will have a law in front of them that says, "You cannot run a deficit. So if you have to close down a hospital ward, close it down. If you have to cut back on the number of surgeries you can do in a day, do that. If you have to lay off nurses"—I guess they'd have to look

at that too. It's frightening what's happening overall in Ontario with regard to health care and education, environmental protection, labour law and social services.

1620

It used to be for decades, even under previous Tories, that you could manage the economy and the great gifts that we've been given, those of us who are lucky enough to live here, and still incrementally move forward. With the right kind of pressure, a lot of that pressure coming from the labour movement and community groups, we were able to, over time in the past, bring even a Tory government to their senses. And they brought in legislation that was positive that also maintained the economy. We're so rapidly losing that. How do you expect Hamiltonians, for instance, to believe that the health care system is going to be better when they're going to have to cut services? All that really is going to do is to create the kind of climate that you created in our education system. That is one of slow deterioration.

Don't forget, Minister John Snobelen let the cat out of the bag way back when, at the beginning of your last term, when he told a group of staff people—and it's on videotape—that you had to create a crisis to justify the actions. I know if the minister's watching and that's not an exact quote, he'll be all upset. So it may not be exact, but it certainly is a close paraphrasing. The fact of the matter was that they wanted to create turmoil in the education system so people would say to themselves, "Somebody's got to do something," and then when you stepped forward with your plans you said, "Here's what we're going to do to fix it. We're the only ones who have the guts to actually do something about it. We're the only ones who are prepared—the 10 lost years," mumble, mumble, all that stuff. But everything you brought in made things worse.

Now, predictably, with the public system in so much turmoil—and we now know, of course, why you did the back handspring, the flip-flop on extracurricular activities a while ago with regard to teachers: because your senior ministers knew what was in the budget and they needed to get that problem off their plate in order for this plan to work. That plan, of course, is as people feel less and less comfortable about their public school system, whether it's because of the ongoing labour trouble that you caused, the chronic underfunding of our schools that you caused, the lack of adequate and proper textbooks at our schools that you caused, the lack of a decent transportation system that you caused—our schools aren't as clean any more because the custodians had to be laid off; you caused that.

So it's not hard to understand how the average working family begins to start taking a sidelong look at private schools. The average working person doesn't get into the issues nearly as much as we do, obviously. But what they know for sure from experience, from what their children tell them and from just being at their community schools, is that they're falling way behind in terms of the quality that once we all felt was in our education system.

I remind this government, as I have in previous speeches, that education is one of the key competitive advantages we have here in Ontario, and you're blowing it—not for everybody. Those who are well off are even more well off in Mike Harris's Ontario, but for the vast majority of people, things aren't so good. How could any of us fault anyone for saying, "My first priority when I get up every day and the biggest priority when I go to sleep at night is my family." Some of the brighter lights, I believe, in the background in your government are fomenting that. With Snobelen's announcement, that's what that was all about. If you can create this crisis where people no longer view the public education system—and, I say, our public health care system. If they don't view it in the same way, then they're going to look for alternatives, and that works just fine for you.

That brings us to the voucher system you've announced. For a lot of individuals, regardless of the religious aspect, just in terms of the quality of education they want their kids to have, private schools suddenly are at least being talked about at the kitchen table: "Maybe we shouldn't take that vacation this year. Maybe we shouldn't buy the new car or a second car this year. Maybe we shouldn't put an extension on our house. Maybe what we ought to do is take that money and set it aside and send our kids to a private school because their future is so much contingent on the kind of education they get."

Now you've got people sort of looking around. Because you created the crisis that caused the doubt in their minds about the public system, they're looking around, saying, "Well, maybe that's what we ought to do." Then you bring in your voucher system, which is totally consistent with the idea that you start providing tax cuts, and you would do exactly the same thing on private health care if you got to that stage. It's certainly where you want to be.

Then over time that same working family, just your ordinary citizens, starts to begrudge—I'm not talking about the wealthy now, because they've got enough money to play with that they can cover off these sorts of things. They just cut a cheque and that's not a problem. I'm talking about the vast majority of ordinary citizens in Ontario who are not wealthy. If they have scrimped and saved and cut out of other parts of their lives enough money to send their kids to a private school because you've caused them to lose faith in the public system, it won't take too long before that average person, that average family, starts to say, "You know, I'm getting a little tired of paying twice for education. I've got to pay my regular taxes and keep the public system going, plus we have to put in all this money to pay for the private school."

Then it becomes politically palatable to talk about more tax credits on the private side and continue cutting on the public side. That's why the debate about the voucher is about quality public education, the kind of education system that gave us the quality of life we have, certainly the quality of life we get to enjoy. I can't speak

for future generations, but I benefited from the past policies of this province, where education was a priority and eventually—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Order. My apologies. I hate to interrupt the dialogue and so on that you contribute to this place, but I only have a minute in the chair and I wanted to introduce to you Tony Lupusella. Tony represented the riding of Dovercourt from 1975 to 1990. Help me in welcoming him to the members' gallery.

My apologies to the member for Hamilton West.

1630

**Mr Christopherson:** That's fine, Speaker. I appreciate your using the word "dialogue." Had you been sitting over here, it might have been a different word, but thank you.

I was talking about where the mindset of the average person will be if we continue down this road. And eventually where will this take us? We do have the experience south of the border. Again, as a sovereign nation they have a right to make their own laws and decide how they want to structure their own society, as do we. But when we look at some of their experiences in their large urban centres, we see a public education system that's in crisis, not to mention their health care system. There's no reason to believe that's not where we're going to be down the road. Now, that may suit you just fine, and some of your best backers, but for the majority of Ontarians that's not a win. It helps you because you don't think you have to spend as much money on education. There's \$300 million that's going into the voucher system by the time the plan is fully implemented. Does anybody actually believe that, first of all, it's only \$300 million and, secondly, that's where it ends?

We've even got the Premier saying it's a great idea because for everybody who goes to a private school, even with the deduction of the tax credit, taxpayers are still saving money. Great; the whole strategy for providing sufficient funding for the public education system is to have as many people as possible leave. Great plan. It lets you find some of the money to pay for the \$2.4 billion that you've given away to your corporate friends again. That's \$300 million that could have gone into the public education system.

I want to say something else too, because there's an aspect of this that's very disturbing. I debated whether to raise it or not, and I'm going to say it anyway. Rather than having a discussion and a public debate around public education, and the preservation and accessibility of a quality public education system, rather than have that debate about what that should be, what it should look like, how much money, where the money will go—rather than that discussion and that debate, you want a diversion. And boy, there's no quicker diversion in politics after starting a war than there is to start stirring up religious issues. While you keep saying that this is about fairness, what you're doing is igniting religious arguments in this province that can only be damaging.

And let's not kid ourselves: in addition to wanting to get more kids out of the public system because you do save money, this is all about you trying to position yourselves against the official opposition, the Liberals, because you're 20 points behind in the polls. Having said that, one needs to be reminded that there are Liberals who will tell you on the qt that there ought to be a law that prohibits any poll from being published that shows them above 50%, because it seems to be that's the kiss of death for them. Notwithstanding that, this is all about trying to catch out the Liberals, because they were talking about choice. Of course, we see them over there, sort of squirming about—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** Well, the only Liberal in the House is yapping away from the other side; it's the only time they pay attention.

What the government wants to do is to try and nail the Liberals on ground where they're very shaky, which is the whole issue of, what did they mean by "choice"? The Tories went ahead and adopted the idea of allowing children to apply for schools outside their catchment area, and that's going to create a lot of problems too. It's already starting to show itself, certainly in my community.

But having said that, the other aspect of this was when they talked about the further definition of "choice." And you're hoping—you were hoping—to put them on the hot seat over this issue. That's what's driving this in large part: the politics between the government, the official opposition and what the polls are telling both of them.

They also know there are a lot of the same religious groups that will benefit from the voucher idea in terms of individual tax returns of people who already have their children or choose to put their children in private school. But there's not just that issue that it's a benefit for them, but also a lot of these groups have been in the forefront of condemning your policies: condemning your policy of not providing enough money for our health care system, condemning you for not providing enough money for environmental protection, condemning you for what you're doing to the disabled—we talked about it here in the House today.

The clawback of that federal money is shameful. Goodness knows, people benefit very little from their federal Liberal government as it is, and you claw back one of the few crumbs that finds its way down to our communities in terms of people who need it the most. You claw it back. That's even worse than what you did with the health care system. At least you put the money in. The only thing is, you took credit for it and it's not your money. In this case, you claw it back, you take it back.

So a lot of the groups that may, on an individual basis, benefit from your voucher and your tax credit are the same ones who have been condemning you. Quite frankly, I don't think most of them are going to change their minds. You might hope it's the case that we get this religious firestorm in Ontario and that the dynamics will be

such that you can still cobble together enough of a coalition among our population to form a third majority government. You may think that's going to happen. But how shameful to introduce that kind of debate now.

At a time when we've got so much chronic under-funding and the economic outlook isn't exactly the best, you want a nice diversion among people who, by and large, don't support your policies. Let's have a fight about religion. Let's have a fight about funding of religious schools. You'd rather see us as Ontarians have that fight and divide among ourselves than fess up to what you're really up to, which is dismantling all the public services so you can do more tax cuts. That's the essence of this budget. It's the essence of everything you're doing.

Look at all the things you're privatizing—this whole notion that if it's in the public sector, it must be bloated, it must be wasteful, inefficient by definition. Then the private sector—suddenly there are special people there. They come from somewhere else. They come in, and they're not like ordinary people. They're not like the people who work in the public sector. If you have a different label, if instead of "public sector" you have the label "private sector," then everything changes, everything's just wonderful. Look how efficient, look at the costs go down. Meanwhile, the overwhelming majority of money saved when something is privatized is by virtue of getting rid of the union and getting rid of the collective agreement, and you cut wages and benefits for the working people and their families. That's where the efficiency comes from in privatization.

Does that mean everything ought to be public? No. But it doesn't mean everything ought to be private either, and yet that's where you are. There's virtually no aspect of our society where you aren't privatizing something and some worker is losing their benefits, losing their pensions that have been negotiated in collective agreements, losing decent wages they negotiated. You even passed a law that said if you work in the public sector and it's sold to the private sector, unlike in the private sector, the union contract dies. In the private sector, if there's a sale, the contract stays with it. It used to be the same with the public sector. There was no difference, and why would there be? But you brought in a law that said that as soon as anything in the public service of Ontario is privatized, the collective agreement dies. And do you know what? It's not even working. Privatization is not working. The auditor slammed you not that long ago for the privatization of much of the Ministry of Transportation.

1640

The majority of Ontarians aren't even benefiting from your plan, which is that we would all save money by seeing some other poor schmuck get squeezed out of a decent-paying job, right? That's how we all benefit. That's the proposal in front of municipalities. Certainly the whole notion is creeping its way into Hamilton again that if we want to save money—because there's not enough money; you've cut the funding to municipalities.

By the way, where is the money for the education business tax that's killing downtown Hamilton and other downtowns all across the province? Where is the money for that? Still nothing. But it's starting to creep in: "We don't have enough money to do things. Maybe we ought to privatize the collection of garbage."

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** I hear somebody on the other side hollering, "Yeah, that's the way." Yet the only way there's a savings is that you send somebody out the door of their home every morning to do the same job they did yesterday but without a pension plan, without health care benefits and without decent wages. How is that a good thing? If you didn't believe that was the case, why didn't you leave the collective agreements in place when a public service is sold, just like in the private sector? You leave it in the private sector but you eliminate it on the public side. Why? Because you always want to make sure, as best you can, that the numbers show that dollars have been saved, and that's all you'll point to. You'll probably blame it on the fact that it was inefficient before and efficiencies have been brought in. The fact of the matter is, the overwhelming bulk of dollars saved come from someone's quality of life and how much money they have to spend on their kids.

We've now got legislation for full-blown private universities. You're going to privatize our energy, one of the key ingredients—arguably the biggest ingredient—in terms of our natural resources. It has been the fact that we had such an abundance of secure, cheap energy. We're blessed. They privatized it in California and prices went up 650%. They privatized it in Alberta and they're close to having brownouts and blackouts there. But you're going to march right ahead. Why? Because it's privatization. Privatization is going to be good. It's going to save the consumer money. Of course, that's what everything is all about. It's going to save money; it's always going to save taxpayers' money. Who are you kidding?

If you lower the taxes marginally—\$20 or \$30—for the average working family but increase the tuition they have to pay by a phenomenal amount, and more if you're into private universities, what good is the tax cut? If you've got to spend money on insurance premiums because our hospitals have been privatized, where are you saving money? Maybe if you're in the big leagues and you're making hundreds of thousands of dollars every year, the 10%, 20% and 30% tax cut more than offsets those. But if you're the ordinary working family, just a middle-class family—never mind those who are truly in need; I'm not even speaking of that group at this moment, but the vast majority of Ontarians—the \$20 or \$30 is not going to pay that tuition fee increase. It's not going to pay the energy increase. And what do you want people to do in that case? Not use energy? Is that the alternative people are supposed to have?

How far is the tax cut going to go when you have to send your kids to a private school because that's the only place there's a good quality of education? Down in the

States, more and more, if you go to the public schools and have to use the public hospitals, you're seen as a charity case.

If you privatize our public education system—and the first step is in this budget—and you privatize our post-secondary education system and you privatize our health care and you privatize our energy, I defy anybody to show me how your \$20 or \$30 tax cut offsets those costs. That's assuming you can afford it. I could be wrong on the number, but I believe it's around 40 million or 50 million citizens in the United States who have no health insurance. Why? Because there isn't a public system that's broad enough at all. They just deal with special cases. There is no public health care system to speak of and they can't afford the insurance premiums.

One of the things that makes us most competitive in the auto industry, to the tune of \$6 an hour, is the fact that our employers—General Motors in Canada, negotiating with the Canadian Auto Workers—don't have to factor in the cost of health insurance, because we have a public system. That's six bucks an hour competitive advantage with a public health care system and you want to throw it away because your friends are looking at all the money they can make owning hospitals.

I've never had to deal with that thought in my entire life, the thought of a hospital existing for any other purpose than to provide health care to the community. The board of directors are there to ensure that our health care needs are met. It's totally foreign to think about a hospital whose board of directors are more worried about what shareholders are going to say in terms of the profit line rather than, "Did we meet the health care needs of Hamilton?"

Look at the university system. I heard the minister earlier today bragging about her \$293-million announcement, to increase by the year 2003-04, but they're only going to get \$30 million the first year, and you've been told by the Investing in Students Task Force that \$500 million is needed. Same game plan, universities and colleges, only now the legislation is already in place. That's already been done, bringing in privatized universities. We're on our way to seeing our universities either squeezed out of the game, dropping their quality so again they become the charity university, or they'll have to get in the game and start letting more and more corporate need decide what's best taught at university.

Should we care at all what corporations need in terms of people being trained to provide individuals who are skilled to fill jobs available? Of course. That's not the issue. Right now, there is so little funding that presidents of universities are more full-time fundraisers than anything else. Yes, corporations are willing to belly up to the bar and give universities some money, but more and more they want a say, a major say and a growing say in what's being taught.

They should have input. We should know what their needs are. But the university system in Ontario provides one of the highest educations in the world not because we turn out little worker robots—whether they do physical

work or mental work, robotic work is robotic work—no, it's because we turn out people who are well educated, well skilled and rounded, who understand history, who have an appreciation of art and music and the role these play in our life.

Some may go on to become some of the best business leaders in the country—fine. But our university system—by the way, held in awe by many countries around the world—is not just about training workers. It is to educate people, to educate a civilization, so that hopefully the next generation of people who fill these chairs have a broader vision than just the bottom line; that they come here with a sense of what makes a society a good place to live in; and if we have natural benefits, like our geography, that we learn to share those. I'm not suggesting in some Utopian way, where you set a flat rate and everybody is going to earn the same, as much as you might like to point that that's where the direction of that sort of thinking has to inevitably go. Not at all, but dismantling all the things that matter to the people of this province that build a quality of life is wrong.

1650

We've got the new Minister of the Environment popping up and down talking about all the wonderful things they're doing about the environment. The money they've announced in this budget still means that the Ministry of the Environment is receiving half the money it used to before you took power. Talk about putting money where your mouth is. If you really care about Walkerton, if you really care about the environment, if you care that citizens can breathe the air—think about it. It is not even the end of May and we've already had at least one, maybe two, smog alert days where seniors were told to stay indoors. Thirty years ago that would have been science fiction. Today it's reality.

Why would it change if you aren't taking action to change it? And that's just the finances, by the way. There's about 40% less staff. Even if we had the laws to protect our environment, our water, our air, our land, you don't have the bodies there to enforce it. But you made sure you didn't get caught out on that one, because you changed the laws so anyway there's no need for enforcement, and therefore there's no need for the staff. If the law's not there, you don't need people to enforce it.

The single biggest advancement in public health was not miracle drugs, not new procedures, not new technology; it was the provision of clean water. The Romans understood that, if you were lucky enough in Roman times to be a Roman citizen. Good luck if you weren't, but if you were, then you were afforded a view of a society that said, "You know what? We need a way of providing water to the citizens and to the lands that don't have water right now—irrigation—and we need a way to remove waste from our city." Some of those aqueducts are there to this day. Seven people dead, 2,000 hurt badly, and you're still funding the Ministry of the Environment by half of what it used to be funded at before.

What good is a tax cut if, when you drink the water, you get sick or die? What good is a tax cut if your

children can't go to university because your family can't afford tuition? What good is a voucher system if you don't have the money to send your kids to a private school because your government has abandoned the public system that's served us so well? What good is a 20% tax cut if you're sitting in the dark because we don't have the energy?

You know what? That would have been science fiction three years ago. Now it's the reality. Where? Not some Third World entity. California: I think individually the state of California is the eighth largest economy in the world. Energy was not an issue other than the usual politics that energy always is, depending on the times and the ebb and flow. As major issues, that was not the biggest problem they had. It wasn't the biggest problem in Alberta.

Now take a look at where they are after they privatized both of them. Why is anybody surprised? What's this argument that it can't happen here? Does this thinking come from that same special world where all these private sector people come from who are different from everybody else? Is there a whole set of laws of physics that we aren't aware of that says the border of Ontario shall be deemed to be exclusively special? "No matter what happens down here in California, even though we do the same thing, and no matter what happens over here in Alberta, even if we do the same thing, it won't happen here." Why won't it happen here? Because Mike Harris said so.

I suppose if he really meant it, he might have pinky swore, but we know what value that is. Remember the pinky swear with the municipalities? "I wouldn't do anything that would reduce your revenue." When a Premier starts breaking pinky swears, where are you?

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** Mr Silly.

**Mr Christopherson:** Mr Silly, my friend from Hamilton East says.

So you're going to barrel ahead. Most of the back-benchers won't have given it too much thought. They don't need to. They're told what to do by the cabinet. But the reality is that people are going to be sitting, probably down the road, at least the potential will be there—Niagara Falls is a stone's throw away. Even the infinitesimal possibility that we could be sitting in a brownout ought to be absurd, and rather than being absurd, it is a legitimate part of the debate we're having, as limited as you allow public debate in this province. It's now a possible reality that somewhere down the road we may have insufficient energy. Keep in mind, those who are most worried in Alberta are the business leaders.

Go back to the history of Ontario. Why did we develop the way we did during the industrial revolution? In large part it was because of secure—key word given what's going on in California in particular—cheap, not just affordable but cheap, hydro, cheap energy. That was great for business. Now what's great for business is those individuals or those corporations that get to buy into the new world of buying and selling energy. The average citizen? I guess the average citizen got their \$20 or \$30

tax cut. Last year they even got 200 bucks. I wonder what good that's going to be to somebody now? That was last year. It wasn't every year. It was just a one-off thing. What good is that \$200 going to do for somebody this year? Nothing. And the tax cuts for individuals in your budget, this budget? Less than that 200 bucks. It's like you sent them a cheque for \$100.

But for the corporations, money's there, and it'll be in law so they get their cut. And everybody else? Whatever. You've got the right to choose, I guess. I guess that's what you're left with. You're left with your memory of a \$200 cheque, a \$20 or \$30 tax cut, and the fact that you now have the right to choose whether to sit in the dark or not, whether to go to the hospital or not, whether to send your kids to school or not. Is that the choice? I'm going to tell you something: for a lot of Ontarians that's their choice.

As I understand the system in California, the cheaper the energy provision contract you had, the closer you were to the top of the list of people who stopped getting energy when it got scarce. So most of the people—except where it happened in regional areas—who are sitting with brownouts and blackouts are those who didn't have the money to buy a better plan.

See, it all comes back to this notion of, should each of us as individuals build a school for our kids and build a hospital for our kids and now provide our own energy to keep our family going, or do each of us take a few bucks and put it together and say that collectively we can open up a school in this neighbourhood, that collectively we can open up a hospital in this neighbourhood and that collectively we can ensure we can provide energy to business and individuals and hospitals and schools in our province? That whole notion is being blown apart so quickly.

Speaker, because it wasn't done the usual way, is that the count, down to the hour?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Yes.

**Mr Christopherson:** Then that means my time is up. I would just close by saying that I'm prepared to stand by a lot of the projections I made here today, and I'm prepared to have them thrown back at me years down the road. Some of this stuff I've already spoken about in previous years. I'd gladly have that read back because a lot of what you're doing is exactly what I said you would do. It doesn't make me brilliant; it just means that a different perspective on how to govern Ontario creates a different level of quality of life. If we work together we have a higher quality of life. If it's all dog eat dog, then collectively we don't have a better standard of living but a very few get an incredible standard of living. That's the Tory way.

1700

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** After that rousing speech I'm almost speechless, but not quite. The good news is just ahead of us.

I want to start, and it would be remiss of me if I didn't start, by thanking Minister Flaherty, who I believe listened and responded with responsible choices, and

clearly our Premier, as the strong leader that he is with a very strong commitment to promises. It's all through this budget that I want to talk about today.

If you want a copy you can certainly get one from my constituency office or on my Web site. It's worth reading. It's worth the time to read. As I said, it's about responsible choices. I'll probably be splitting my time with Mr Hardeman. I have some remarks that I want to put on the record here.

I think it's sort of like looking at it, and while I was listening on budget day to the minister, much of it as being his parliamentary assistant, I had heard some of the earlier discussions in the broad consultations across this province in 10 days. Mr Christoperson was a member of those consultations, as was Mr Phillips. We did hear from a range of constituents, whom in fact we all try to serve. These are people from the issue of shelter and homelessness all the way to the financial community talking to us about interest rates and competitiveness. But I can assure you that hearing all that very complex and important input is what we were there for. In fact, there was a report issued by the committee to the minister. That was just one part of the consultations. The minister had many formal occasions to meet with the health community, the education community and the environment community, and certainly there's evidence in this document, as I go it through this afternoon, that you'll hear very clearly was there for the minister to consider and is clearly in the budget.

I don't want to make this a talk about John O'Toole and Durham riding—

**Interjection:** Oh, go ahead.

**Mr O'Toole:** Well, I will.

Really, I was overwhelmed personally. It may sound almost selfish in a way—we serve all the people—but when they announced the Ontario Institute of Technology in Durham, it's a dream of a community of people. That's what it is. It's important to put it in context. I would say that Gary Polonsky and Terry Hing and the student community, as well as the CAW, General Motors, all of the community, contributed in an absolutely non-partisan way and, I would say to myself, also committed to that fundraising effort that occurred. They had a plan for \$12 million and it grew to \$15 million. That was in the 1990s; 1998 I believe it was. That formed the basis for community support, and then the awareness that there were 500,000 people in Durham, a rapidly growing area with a nuclear plant, General Motors, the Ministry of Finance building and a large agricultural component, and citizens without a lot of infrastructure around them. A university, and the research that goes along with that, was absolutely critical.

I personally want to thank the minister for doing the right thing, and the Premier and all of cabinet who were part of that important decision to allow that dream of the people from Durham to come true. So in a very selfish way I take a moment to acknowledge that and thank all of the citizens. It was a very fortunate privilege to have a very small part in that, along with Jerry Ouellette and

Janet Ecker, and Chris Hodgson and Jim Flaherty. Certainly, I know we all worked hard, along with the mayors and regional chair Roger Anderson. To make this dream come true was probably the most satisfying experience. Then to be thanked personally in the budget speech by the minister, well, I rushed down and asked Minister Flaherty and the Premier to sign it, because this becomes a piece of historic testimony for my five children. All of this experience is personal to me because I really think that we all, on both sides of the House, try to make a contribution and to be recognized over and above the small stipend that we receive for this job. It's done more for content—

*Interjection.*

**Mr O'Toole:** I hear Mr Smitherman barracking. I'm sorry if I woke you up.

Anyway, it gets down to the fundamental economics of it all, and the fundamental finances of it all are really a substantive part of what I have to say in the few moments left.

A remarkable achievement—clearly a remarkable achievement—is about the only proper definition, and that's a balanced budget for three years in a row, the first time in a hundred years. No one could disagree with the important statement that sends to the taxpayers of Ontario, our commitment to not go beyond having a balanced budget.

There's a temptation to overspend, Mr Speaker. You were a member of a government that just loves to solve every problem by writing a cheque. A lot of times there are tough decisions, whether it's the province or the federal or municipal government. Mel Lastman is a perfect example, always whining for more money. It's almost tiresome, actually. The solutions are there for sophisticated organizations and government to deal with it by trying to make every single tax dollar count.

I think the next most important kind of theme or statement or benchmark of excellence in management and fiscal prudence would be the fact that we had a surplus. In fact, the surplus was in excess of \$3 billion, coming out of that fiscal year. It's the largest single payment on provincial debt ever, it's my understanding. Three billion dollars was paid toward the debt. As we all know—it's almost \$600 billion federally—the debt interest, the interest on the debt, is what's crowding out program spending. So if you let the debt grow without addressing it, you end up paying annually, I think it's \$9 million in debt interest. Pardon me. It's \$9 billion in debt interest on the outstanding debt, which is about \$110 billion.

In my view, that money could be spent arguably in health, education, safe communities, a large number of areas. You can't just spend money you don't have. The families and the people of Ontario and the people that I represent in Durham can't do it either, and I don't think the government can do it without extremely sound reasons. That's what we introduced: balanced budget legislation, that when there were dire circumstances in the economy would be the only time that you could have a deficit or you could raise taxes.

I've mentioned the two important themes, one of which was balancing the budget a third year in a row. The next one, of course, was the debt repayment. But of course the proverbial one has to be our commitment, a non-relenting commitment, to cutting taxes.

Why do I put all of these principles ahead of the people? It's important to understand conceptually what perhaps we've often heard referred to as the lost decade, 10 years of mismanagement and irresponsible governments. How it really works, the equation really has three pieces to it. In fact, it has four. I'll add the fourth later.

The three principal equations are, first, you have to have a strong economy. That strong economy creates wealth for both individuals and companies. That wealth becomes part of the tax base, which allows you to have an education and health care system. Without the wealth and the wealth generation infrastructure, you can't have the public resources for the hospitals and other services provided by government.

The third piece is to be fiscally responsible; that is, balanced budgets and that sort of stuff. It's those three principles that this government and our Premier are firmly committed to. The fiscal responsibility part shows up very clearly in this budget, much of which will be talked about over the next while.

But I want to add a fourth, and that fourth is leadership with a vision. Because if you have no vision or direction, you're actually going in circles, you're not going anywhere. You have to have clear commitment to a vision. You have to have clear leadership in that vision to deliver on your promises. I think that's no better demonstrated than with Premier Harris. There are difficult decisions, and I know how hard it must be to do his job, but that is how we've achieved the milestone of three balanced budgets consecutively.

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Now, a bit of background with respect to the tax-cutting, I think, is a very important part, while at the same time addressing important expenditure areas. Because if you look at the details, there is increased funding for health care, there's increased funding for education, there's increased funding for the environment, there's increased funding in a number of other areas, but I generally classify it as vulnerable people.

We have in fact cut personal income tax between 1996 and 1999 by 30%. We can translate that out to a typical family of two earners with two children as roughly \$2,400 in tax savings. Now, let's put \$2,400 in perspective. I understand from the member opposite that clearly, when people see that the consumers, the taxpayers of Ontario, have an additional \$2,400 in their jeans, what happens is this: often there's a temptation by other levels of government to take it back.

We saw that with the federal government. They saw us creating much more disposable income in the pockets. What did they do, Mr Speaker? You know what they did. They upped the CPP premiums and they upped the UI premiums. The federal government clawed it all back. It's tragic, actually. If one of my constituents, like me an

ordinary person—I'm here so I get told this stuff. I don't know it innately; I'm told it and I listen thoroughly. I thought, "Gee, that's tragic. What's happening to the hard-working people, the people working shifts and working overtime and having it clawed back through higher CPP and UI premiums?" Then I look at the federal government. What have they got? They've got in excess of a \$20-billion surplus.

Where did a lot of that come from? Ontario. We're a very, very generous family. I can account for my community. As I've described with the Durham university fund, extremely generous: a target of \$10 million, raised \$15 million; United Way, hospital fundraising. In every area our community is generous to a fault. But I can tell you this as well: unless you give people back the money that is taken away by some other level of government, they can't be generous and they can't make choices about which charity, whether it's heart and stroke or cancer. As we're talking, May is Cancer Month. People like to be generous. They like to be empowered. Why should Big Brother—government—always be telling them where their money's going, some bureaucrat sitting there deciding we're going to give \$576 million to the arts community? I have no problem with that. I'm certain that in my community, many individuals would have felt empowered if they had the money in their jeans to write the cheque to the local, in my case, art gallery or the museums or theatre groups, whatever, to help the arts community. The message I'm trying to say is that government makes choices.

But in 1999, the government made a promise: Ontario taxpayers would get an additional 20% reduction. That's \$4 billion over five years. The budget proposed to complete this tax promise, with the result that the average tax savings for the public with income less than \$100,000 would exceed 20%. I want to repeat that: it's going to exceed 20% reduction. The largest percentage reduction would be concentrated on taxpayers of low to middle income. In fact, we changed the marginal tax rates for the surtaxes, I think, from \$54,000 to \$63,000, which is the middle income: the skilled trade person, the person working at Ontario Power Generation in Darlington and other people who work, including in that nurses and teachers. These are the income groups that make in that salary range: front-line, hard-working people who deserve a tax break. This isn't even political. This is about putting back in their jeans the money they earn. You see, government really has no money. It takes your money and gives it to somebody else. It's as simple as that.

The largest percentage, as I said, would go to the middle-income people. They're the people who make up this province. In fact, the most important part of this province is small business, and those are the people who actually make this province go around. More than \$4 billion of additional tax savings would be delivered to Ontario taxpayers.

I should say that despite cutting taxes and despite all the naysayers, from 1994, before he was Premier, when Premier Harris was touting this idea of cutting taxes and

raising revenue, it was very clear that some people didn't get it. Certainly the opposition and the NDP didn't get it.

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** They still don't.

**Mr O'Toole:** They still don't get it—the experts. But, in fairness, there are some who are getting it. There really are.

We did cut taxes—in fact, by \$4 billion. What has happened to revenue? Revenue has gone up \$15 billion, because I gave you the money to go to the florist shop to help the person who's doing the growing. That's how the economy works. But when you give it to government—and that comes down to one of the points I'll make later, the whole issue of accountability in government spending. If I'm pouring money into health care or education, what's the mechanism for measuring the results? If business does it and it doesn't work, the shareholder dumps the stock and they're out of business. It's that simple.

The best evidence I can think of is the job creation we committed to: 550,000 jobs between 1998 and 2000. As recently as April 2001, employment rose by 23,600 and the unemployment rate was 5.9%. Job growth will continue in 2001. The growth is slow, but there's still growth. It's 2.2%. There will be those who talk today that at least it's not negative growth. We have a far more diversified economy, and certainly that's how we're developing this province.

The Ontario economy has grown 25% since 1995—more evidence. There are also more positive indicators that I'll quickly put on the record. Real exports as a percentage of GDP have grown from 59.8% to 70.2%, an increase of 17.3%. Housing starts have gone from 35,800 to 71,500, a 99.7% increase—almost a 100% increase in five years. The consumer confidence index from 1991 as the base of 100% has grown from 97.7% to 122.6%, a 25.5% increase. Retail sales have grown from \$79.6 billion to \$106.4 billion, a 33.7% increase. Auto sales have grown from 452,800 units to 660,800, a 45.9% increase. Disposal income—the bottom line here—has climbed from \$209.8 billion to \$256.2 billion, a 22.1% increase in disposable income.

There are other measurements, but certainly I think it's evidence that the plan worked. If we can establish nothing more than confident, stable planning and a promising future as we look forward—I think Paul Martin also is a further compliment in that he's now addressing the tax issue, which allows the economy to grow, and not for government to smother it.

The final testimony had to come when the Prime Minister used as a reference that the province of Ontario and Mike Harris are showing the way. Other Premiers are leading the way as well. I think the best compliment is to be imitated. I know the Premier is always listening and always aware, and I hope he gets these remarks, because it certainly won't hurt my future—I'm only being fliprant on that.

However, I would say that one of the themes we've brought forward in the plan is Ontario's edge. I should

take the remaining time to make a commitment to, first of all, economic stability within the province. We have a tax review panel that's going to review economic measures, tax policies and other things, but also building toward a quality of life in Ontario is extremely important. I want to say the Business Tax Review Panel will be made up of experts. They will also be considering such items as the tax on fuel conversion—a very important part, the gas guzzler tax—introduced by the Liberals and increased by the NDP and important to my riding of Durham, an auto-sector riding, and many other ridings as well.

There's a commitment here of some \$500 million to public transit, which is very important in my riding, as it is a commuting riding. There is the important commitment of \$1.2 billion in health care, growing by 5.4%. Premier Harris and our minister, Tony Clement, are leading the way on questioning the sustainability of health care. It's an important debate to have. I think Roy Romanow will be considering this, but we're not patient enough to wait. As the largest province in Canada, it's important to have strong leadership, and we are encouraging that debate. In fact, I'll be having many forums in my riding of Durham in the month of June.

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I can tell you that the most important thing in this whole public sector accountability is having Erik Peters, the Provincial Auditor, actually looking at best practice and value for money. We need that in our public sector, we need it in this province and, arguably, we need it in the federal government.

I've run out of time, unfortunately, but I have much more to say on the issue, and with your indulgence I'll continue.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** I just want to make a few comments on what the member from Durham said. I'm glad everything is great in his riding because there are other areas of the province that are not as wonderful as he says.

I know we all have to protect our water, our food and our air or our health care will skyrocket.

He talked about the tax break. He should tell the residents of Ontario that it was all borrowed money that they gave in the tax break.

The member talked about how great things were, but in my community we still have 17 people travelling to have dialysis treatment in Ottawa and Brockville, and that's unacceptable. We have the facility right in Cornwall that could solve that problem, but it's getting through the red tape and the other issues. It wouldn't cost the government one penny more to have that treatment for the residents at home rather than have them travel and go through that four hours—two hours each way—and parking and everything else that goes along with it.

He talked about how wonderful everything else is but he should come to eastern Ontario and look at some of our roads and bridges that have been downloaded on to the municipalities.

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** He's not even listening.

**Mr Cleary:** I know he's not listening. He's busy there.

The bridges are a disgrace, there are overpasses that need repair, and the municipalities can't get through to get their share of that money from the provincial government. In the township of Williamsburg, South Dundas, they have many bridges and roads where the infrastructure has deteriorated. You used to be able to get supplementary funds to solve some of these problems, but not under this government.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I listened carefully, of course, and I'm going to paraphrase what I think the member from Durham said. "The government has no money, but we take your money and then we give it back to you," is what I think he more or less said, and then added, "We've had increased funding of 15 billion bucks since 1995." My question is, where did it go? Where is it? It certainly didn't go into hospitals, because everybody is crying. It didn't go into the education system, because everybody is saying, "We're hurting." They took about \$2 billion out of there. It didn't go into the post-secondary education system, our colleges and universities, because they took about \$2 billion since 1995. Where is the money going?

"Where are your priorities?" is the question that most Ontarians are asking. It appears, member for Durham, that your priority as a government is to facilitate privatization of resources that we own and that ought to be in the hands of the public. What you're doing is saying to the public sector, "Don't you worry, we are here"—genuflect—"to serve your needs."

You are giving away POSO, the Province of Ontario Savings Office. It's a money-making office. It's a bank, the provincial bank. We make a lot of money out of that, money that can be used to help those areas that you say you have no money for. Why would you be selling a Province of Ontario Savings Office that makes money and facilitating its privatization so that presumably the private sector can enjoy the fruit of what we as a government have done? It doesn't make any sense, member from Durham.

You took \$2.4 billion of our money and gave it away to the corporate sector, almost an equivalent amount to what you took away from the public education system. Member from Durham, you've got to speak to these matters.

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** I am pleased to participate today and to comment on the member for Durham, who serves as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance. I think he gave an excellent presentation here this afternoon. I know all the members present here enjoyed his speech, as they do on all days. He provided an excellent opportunity for the people of Ontario to hear more about the balanced budget that was brought forward by the finance minister and Deputy Premier, Jim Flaherty.

In fact, this budget is now balanced. It is the third year in a row that the government of Ontario has presented a balanced budget. I remember the finance minister's first words in the House here when he spoke about the budget. He said, "Mr Speaker, the budget is balanced." That sent, again, a strong message to the people of Ontario. In fact, the people of Ontario now have taxpayer protection legislation that includes that all budgets in this province must be balanced. There are penalties for cabinet ministers if the budget is not balanced. This government has lived up to its word by balancing the budget for the third consecutive time. I might add that's the first time in almost 100 years that there have been back to back to back balanced budgets. I think the people of Ontario realize that this government is showing strong leadership in that regard.

We also made a \$3-billion debt repayment. We made a commitment in our Blueprint document that we would make a \$5-billion debt repayment this term of office. We are well on the road to doing that. There's been \$3 billion. That's the largest debt repayment ever.

Taxes continue to be down in our province. Revenue is up. Job numbers are up. I know back when the Common Sense Revolution came out, we said that 725,000 new net jobs would be created in this province. We're well over the 800,000 mark. We've seen that. Because investment is up, because taxes are down, the revenue is up for the government. We've kept our word. I want to compliment the member for Durham for his excellent speech this afternoon.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** I'd like to say to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, I wouldn't give the member from Durham the 9.6 that you gave him, but somewhat less than that. He's trying very hard over there, I know, and we have to give him points for that. But I'm glad the Minister of Northern Development is here because I think it gives me another opportunity in this House to remind him of some of the areas regarding northern Ontario on which this budget was silent.

One big thing is the health travel grant in northern Ontario. I would say it is probably one of the biggest issues right now in northern Ontario, especially when not only is it inadequately funded, but what sticks in the northerners' craw is that example in cancer treatment where southerners who have to travel to Buffalo or to northern Ontario receive a much more generous benefit. That really sticks in the craw of northerners.

The other area that I know northerners are very concerned about is the 10% reduction in highway construction that is for the whole province, but especially in northern Ontario where the highway conditions are in great need of repair. I know there's been considerable upgrading in the last few years. That needs to continue. Having a 10% cut right now, especially with a slowing economy, is certainly bad timing and is not going to get the job done. I encourage you to get back to the commitment that you had started a few years ago so that we

can get the job completed and the highway up to standard in northern Ontario.

The last thing I'd want to say, that I know is a concern of many members from the north, is the \$157 million that sits there in the heritage fund. That was committed in previous years, yet because the fund was looking at redesigning its criteria, it has not been able to invest in northern Ontario. We need that money invested in the north. It is there. We're not asking for new money. It is money that you've committed. You've doubled that money and we'd like to see it invested in northern Ontario.

#### **The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr O'Toole:** I'd thank the members from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh, Trinity-Spadina, Timiskaming-Cochrane, and Minister Newman, of course, from Scarborough Southwest.

I'll briefly try to respond to the points they've raised, which were good; they were paying attention.

The first member talked about infrastructure and its importance. You should know that the \$20-billion SuperBuild fund is all about building infrastructure. Part of it has been rolled out under OSTAR, which is an Ontario small town and rural development initiative. That's a commitment to building infrastructure. This was neglected for 10 years. There's a 10-year commitment of \$20 billion of public and private money.

The member from Trinity-Spadina talked about \$15 billion and questioned me on where it went. I wish he had asked that question in 1992, 1993 and 1994, because there was an \$11-billion deficit that we started with. Now we have a surplus of \$3 billion. There are the numbers. Clearly, he still doesn't get it. There is more money coming in. We were spending \$1 million an hour—we all know that story—every hour on the interest on the debt, which they had doubled. So it's an unfair question, but it's fair for me to point out to him that if you add the numbers—\$11 billion and almost \$4 billion—that's \$15 billion.

**1730**

I should say that we have increased funding in almost all of the priority areas. One of the areas he mentioned was health care. We started in 1995. If you look at any provincial budget, it was 38 cents on the dollar, and now it's 45 cents on every dollar. We have made major commitments year after year and it's clear, whether it's the Fyke commission or whether it's Roy Romanow, that it's not sustainable, and our government is setting about to fix it, not to stall the problem, as I think the federal government is.

The Minister of Northern Development and Mines is very familiar with the north, and the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane mentioned there was some question with the northern heritage fund. Clearly Mr Newman has committed to sustainability in the north and marketing of the north. From \$30 million, he has doubled it to \$60 million. It's the right thing to do.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale.

**Mr Smitherman:** When I stood in this House and made my maiden speech in October 1999 on Bill 5, the same-sex spousal benefits bill, I said that I thought it would be the most important speech I ever gave in the Legislature. I'm here today to tell you that the most important issue I've confronted in my time in public office is before us, and it's contained in this government's budget.

The issue of a properly and adequately funded system of public education is an issue that defines my Liberalism and informs my view of Canada. I believe therefore that the debate we are engaged in at the moment is a crucial one for the future of our great country and our province. It's important to put it in context. If we are prepared to see this kind of tax credit voucher system used in a sense to offer an incentive to people to obtain educational services outside of the broad public realm, then it is a slippery slope toward exactly the same principle being applied to the issue of health care. It is in these adequately funded systems of public health and public education that I find my view of Canada formed and shaped, and the fundamental role of public education in our society is enormously important.

The *Globe and Mail* isn't always a supporter of my party; in fact, it's more likely to be a supporter of the government. But in the lead editorial on Friday, entitled Mike Harris's Body Blow to the Public Schools, they made a salient comment: "In a multicultural society such as Canada's, public schools are much more than places of instruction. They are the forge of integration. Schools are where young people of different classes, nationalities and faiths come together as Canadians."

I find that comment to be highly reflective of my view with respect to education, and it is in that I find enormous concern with the approach the government is taking to offer an incentive to parents to take their kids out of the public education system.

I want to talk about that in the context of my riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale. Much has been said in the course of the last few days around this debate that this is about fairness and equality. But the most important experience, the most emotionally moving experience I've had in my two years as a member of this place, was in witnessing the celebration of Black History Month at Park school in Regent Park, where kids of different backgrounds, different faiths and different colours participated in the celebration of black history. To see black history interpreted by Asian children and white children was an incredibly moving thing. This is the product of our public education system, taking place in one of the poorest neighbourhoods known to our country. Similarly, I've seen at Regent Park/Duke of York school a commitment to understanding and learning more about the Muslim faith by students who are from different faiths. This is the kind of thing I fear is at risk.

I was heckled yesterday by the member from Kitchener, who thought that because many of my constituents are wealthy and have made the commitment to private schools for their children, I would be standing

alongside them. But I had the opportunity this past weekend at the May fair in Rosedale to speak to many of the more affluent members of our society. Many of those who have had the privilege of a private school education understand that is a privilege—they're wealthy people in many instances—but they also understand that there is a parallel commitment on their part to an adequately funded system of public education because they understand that a Canada that is distinct from the United States is a Canada where the disparity between our richest and poorest is narrowed as a result of our commitment to public education and indeed to public health care. That is what is at risk and what is being lost.

I realize that this is not a debate just about those who are wealthy. We've heard, of course, that many parents who are, I would say, in the broad middle class are sending their children to religious and private schools. Some of them are doing so for specific reasons related to their culture or to their religion, but others unfortunately are increasingly being forced to pull their children out of public education and send them to private schools because of the declining quality of the public education system.

I believe that the government's initiative of the other day is in a sense a message from the government that they're throwing in the towel, that they have abandoned the opportunities to enhance and improve the public education system, to build on this fantastic base of quality that has been there and served us generation after generation after generation. Instead, we're moving toward a system where we will have two systems of education in this province: one for those who have and one for those who have not.

I fear that in my riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale, a place that already deals too much with the broad disparity between rich and poor, in the absence of these well-funded systems of public education and public health this disparity will grow and Toronto—my beloved Toronto—will look more and more like cities in the United States.

I believe that's what is at stake here and that is why on this issue, since Wednesday, I have found a new life, a new enthusiasm to get out and work against this government's budget and particularly to focus on this issue. I believe that this initiative on the part of the government is nothing less than an incentive to those parents who have concerns about the quality of public education to give up on it and to pull their kids out of the public education system. I think that's shameful.

Much has been said about the Catholic system, but the experience in my riding with the Catholic system is that it mirrors so much of the quality of what is referred to generally as the public education system. The children who stream in and out of Catholic schools in my riding, like St Paul and like Our Lady of Lourdes, reflect the broad diversity of my riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale, and there they learn and benefit from this great mix of culture and religion that takes place in environments like in the public school system.

Equity issues have been raised and the Premier, in his appearance yesterday, spoke about fairness and equality, but I wonder how this will be extended. The member for Simcoe North has been very active in ensuring that the only prayer that's ever offered in this place is the traditional prayer. Statutory holidays very closely resemble Christian traditions, which are not the traditions for all. Will we see a move, as a result of this commitment to equity, for Telehealth Ontario? Will it be available to people who speak any language, regardless of their numbers? And do those who support this extension of opportunity to send kids to schools which are segregated want to see a breakdown to the point where parents of gays and lesbians are establishing school boards and schools that speak to their issues, perhaps at the expense of others? That's something that I would oppose.

I would say also with respect to the word "accountability," which has rung from this government in its throne speech, that they are rather hollow when it comes to this issue. There is a double standard being created. I quote again from that *Globe and Mail* editorial which said, "Private schools, moreover, need not employ provincially certified teachers, submit to inspection, publish their budgets or be accountable." I think that highlights the fundamental hypocrisy of this effort.

We also have heard so much about the United Nations and I would want to quote again from the *Globe and Mail*, which spoke to the fact that Ontario funds Catholic schools but it does not mean that it needs to fund all religious schools. This dates back to the history of our country. To lose sight of that I think clouds the very nature of this debate.

The point I want to close on relates very clearly to my view about segregation. In my riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale, I say often that if people wake up in the morning and think not about what they have in common with their neighbours but rather what their differences are, if they get on a different school bus, if they walk a different route and if they take a different approach, the chances are that the relative peace and calm that come even in neighbourhoods with 50, 60, 70, 80 different nationalities will be shattered. The opportunities in the public system for Eritreans and Ethiopians, whose countries are at war, still to be schooled together will leave; they will be diminished. I think that the mixed faces who reflect the incredible gift of diversity that this world, in all of its marvellous breadth, has given Canada is at risk. That is what is at risk here.

**1740**

I think we need to face a reality: that this policy, this segregationist policy, threatens to destroy the key contributor to that famous indicator that allowed the United Nations to declare Canada the best country in the world in which to live. Do you think the United Nations had that in mind when in all of their wisdom they decided they should supersede the Canadian Constitution and the Supreme Court of Canada? I think they missed the point. I think they missed the point about the fundamental basis

of Canada, the two-founding-nations principle which has informed our spirit and I think helped to shape a public education system which has been providing an extraordinary capacity for people from all over the world, of mixed cultures, to come together and in one spirit move forward to create the greatest country on earth. The government, in their initiative as contained in their budget, is putting that at risk.

I'd like to share my time with the member from Windsor.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** Of all the years I've been here since June 1995, this budget was the most disappointing to me. I want to speak to how this budget is negatively impacting on Windsor.

Truthfully, all of the years I've been here I've watched the government take monies out of the most important institutions that run in my city and that are of primary importance to the people and the residents of Windsor: namely, our public education system and our hospitals. We've had dramatic changes in the way we're delivering health service since this government has come to power; none of them have been positive. Ideologically they have been so right-wing and they have been implemented in such a terrible manner that in the end none of us can say that our public education system is better because of it or that our health care system is better because of it.

I want to talk about the impact on Windsor as the canary in the coal mines for much of the change in Ontario, because we were always on the verge—on the verge of doing great things until the government comes along and throws a wrench into the plan.

I want to talk about overall funding of hospitals. When the Health Services Restructuring Commission came out and decided that they were going to make wholesale changes to the way we deliver health care, in retrospect, today we are echoing the words we said in here when that commission laid its reports on these tables. We knew that it was wrong. We knew that the funding was inadequate and it wasn't in the right place to allow for that kind of change. Today in Ontario, and especially in my riding of Windsor, we see those changes happening. We see community care access centres which are struggling under the weight of trying to provide services to people that are required because people are being booted from hospitals sicker and quicker, and everyone admits that's the case.

Today when we review the budget, what do we see that they've done for our hospitals which are dealing with this kind of crisis? They've cut \$100 million more out of operating budgets for hospitals across Ontario. What will that mean to volunteer boards and the decisions they will be making? They will run deficits. Oh, but we have an accountability piece now by this government that says, "No, you can't do that." These volunteer boards then have to decide, "What services will we do without?" Those will be the decisions we're going to continue to make and have continued to make in my community. So I bring cases in here of people who can't access health care, and I ask you, whether it's a discussion about the

north or the south, about any issue—gridlock, transportation, SuperBuild—ultimately, if we don't have our health care, none of that matters, which is why it is of paramount importance that we get this right.

We have come time and time again to each new minister. We've gone through the list, like we have with this most recent, the nine-point plan of what we can do immediately in my riding to make positive change. How do we go through primary care reform without the necessary number of doctors? We cannot. We've advanced how we could streamline the process of foreign-trained physicians to get them working tomorrow in Ontario, but we've been ignored, and that wasn't even touched on in this budget. We talked about how we can do things like bring angioplasty to Windsor so that we can move forward, so that patients aren't waiting three times the length of time for such a simple cardiac procedure in Windsor that the guidelines say across the province. But that's what is happening today in my community because this government doesn't come forward with solutions. What did we see about that in this budget? Absolutely nothing.

I want to mention the sustainability question in health care, that this government has determined to talk about the notion of private hospitals—any option will do. I say the government asks the wrong question. It's not, "Is medicare sustainable?" The question is, "How do we sustain it?" because paramount to us as Canadians is the notion that we will have a public, accessible system. Our work in this House is to find ways to better the accessibility of it, not to make determinations of how we're going to do without service. That's what the people in my riding ask us for regularly.

I want to talk about the impact of infrastructure in my community. As a rough estimate, we've lost \$5 million just in road maintenance in my community in this downloading exercise that was never revenue-neutral. Everyone knows it was not revenue-neutral. So you created SuperBuild. We heard hardly anything about SuperBuild, because what we said happened when you determined to go down this road. We said from the beginning that that was a notion that would not work. So far, the government has managed to make announcements of a mere \$4 million of capital expansion out there in Ontario, when you assigned \$200 million for that project, because you can't get your head around the fact that some government services will not be provided by the private sector.

Then the Premier himself discusses the notion of private hospitals, so that a lead doctor in my own community wants to stand and say, "Let's turn Grace hospital into a private hospital." I asked some very basic questions. We asked the Premier in the House; he refuses to answer the question that I put to him directly: would we, as Windsorites, stand for watching Americans come flying in on a helicopter to receive care so that we might make money off those Americans while our Windsorites are looking through the window like in some Charles Dickens novel, watching Americans access care that our

own Windsorites cannot access—can't access in Windsor, and moreover get put on enormously long waiting lists through London, the supposed mecca of southwestern medical care? When I speak to doctors in London, what do they tell me? They are as strapped as those who are in Windsor, and Londoners themselves can't access the system in London. We have huge issues around access to health care.

Those are the things we wanted to see addressed in the budget, not further cuts; not huge grand statements about, of all things, a voucher system for private schools. The Ontario government, since it took office in 1995, has crippled public education in Ontario. It has put public education on its knees so that you now choose to come forward with a notion of a private school voucher to benefit but a few. The Premier himself suggested this is about fairness, so that these parents who pay education taxes—you can't raise the spectre of fairness in how we pay to support services that all of us, having children or not, all of us, needing health care or not, are prepared to pay into for the good of a community. That is very basic about Canadian living. In this budget, this government takes us down a road that none of us agreed to go down, making such monumental philosophical shifts about government services and how they're to be delivered that you owed it to the public to make this part of a 1999 election platform. You owed it to us to vote you to be there going down that road, and you chose not to do that. This will come home to roost for this government.

I want to talk about accountability. The government spent so much time in the budget talking about it. I want to talk about the accountability of this government to slash across ministries that were relevant to all of us, like the environment, and where we will see today, through a Walkerton inquiry, what role the provincial government had in Walkerton and the disaster that befell the people who lived there—what role, what accountability to doubling the office size of the Premier while the rest of us deal with emergency room crisis and people who cannot access simple things like a knee surgery in time and are now on the welfare system.

I want to talk about the accountability of Cancer Care Ontario, with no tendering process to enter into an agreement with a private firm at \$4 million of start-up costs for that private company after no public tendering process. This same government has the gall now to stand and talk about accountability of other broader public sector partners, when this government itself is not accountable—the Premier, who cannot have better attendance in this House, after four months of not being in the House, cannot come in here on a regular basis and answer the questions that my residents, whether they live on Elsmere Ave or Marentette or Parent or in south Windsor, demand to have answers for. That's what the Premier's job is and I recommend that he get in here and take his job seriously.

1750

I want to talk about what this budget truly means to Windsor. We have normal expectations in Windsor of the

provincial government. We want our health care to be there for us when we need it. We want a school system that takes care of our children. We want to know that next year, when the grade 11 students take their new Ontario curriculum, they will have textbooks. We did not want to see \$300 million to \$500 million being set aside for private school vouchers, while the majority of our students are doing without in the public system.

Whether you go to Begley in downtown Windsor or whether you're in Southwood in south Windsor, all of those children deserve to have access to the equalizer that public education has meant for generations. My parents knew that was the case when they came to this country, that the public education system would give me every opportunity. Whether you came from some part of Rosedale or from Windsor west, all of us have the same—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Questions, comments?

**Mr Marchese:** I want to speak for two minutes to the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, because I agree with the thrust of his argument, that philosophically New Democrats are opposed to the extension of public dollars for private schools. Philosophically, politically, we believe it's wrong. New Democrats have always been unwavering and unambiguous about that. For me, consistency is critical.

I've got to say that in this regard, both the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party have got a problem, because when Minister Ecker today said, "I want to be clear; we've always been clear: we're for choice," I read out a quotation from her that reads in the following way: "We have been very clear that our goal is a good quality public education, and the estimates of \$300 million needed to fund religious schools would be \$300 million that would come out of the public system." That's what Minister Ecker said but a mere six months ago or so. Her position was very unambiguous, very clear: "We will not support publicly private schools, religious or class-based schools." She was profoundly clear.

When I hear Madame Janet, whom I will probably refer to as Madame Janus, the two-faced mythical character, I've got to remind her that she's not so very clear.

Respectively, with the Liberals, Mr Kennedy was quoted as saying on May 11, Bloor West Village, "The Liberals say it's an issue of fairness. Private schools do have to be funded, but in a way that doesn't hurt public schools." So I say to the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, you've got to be consistent. You can't have it each and every way. You can't slither hither and thither. You can't.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** First of all, I just would like to respond to the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale. He covered a whole range of subjects, but the one for which I'm on my feet particularly is when he runs for election under the British parliamentary system and wins his riding and has the privilege of representing his constituents in this place and

then wants to change the hundreds-of-years-old tradition of this place, I really get upset.

He's referring to having something in here that represents everybody in terms of the opening prayers, readings and so forth. You know, the wonderful thing about the diversity of the members in this place is that we do represent all the different interests of our ridings and the people who live there. But it doesn't mean that we come to this place and suddenly say, "The British parliamentary system doesn't address the needs and we have to change what we've been doing." I am totally opposed to any consideration of changing the opening prayers of this assembly. This subject has come up a number of times in the last 17 years, and when that member refers to that, it gives me a great deal of concern.

The member for Windsor West talks about health care. She talks about an equalized public education system. It is our government that introduced the equalized funding of students across this province, no matter where they lived, whether they were in a wealthy board or an assessment-poor board. Every student in this province now has the same amount of money allocated to their education. I wish the member for Windsor West understood a little bit more about—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** I am pleased to make a few comments about the debate today on the budget. Particularly, I want to compliment my colleagues on their comments because for the most part—totally—they reflect the view of the Liberal caucus, our leader Dalton McGuinty and obviously the view of many working families in Ontario.

I was pleased to see some things in the budget. One was that the debt is beginning to be paid down. I'm pleased to see that the debt is beginning to be paid down, because the Conservative Party of Ontario is responsible for by far the greatest part of the debt. We know that since this government took office, it increased the debt by some \$20 billion. If you take away from that the \$5 billion the Liberals added to the debt of the province and the some \$40 billion to \$45 billion the NDP added to the debt of the province, by far the greatest debt in Ontario was created by the Conservative Party, and \$20 billion of that in just the last few years.

That's because they gave a tax break before one should have been given. I can remember when Mike Harris was the leader of the third party sitting down there and saying, "This province is bankrupt." What did he do the first time he got into office? He gave the province a tax break. I don't think there are many businesses on the verge of bankruptcy that would give a dividend before they got their fiscal house in order. And he wouldn't have had to borrow that \$20 billion.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mrs Pupatello:** I wish we had more time to go into detail about the kind of impact a budget like this will have on my community. We have to continue to struggle for the most basic of things, like access to a family doctor. I want every one of the Conservative Party

members to come to my riding and meet some of the 40,000 people who can't access a family doctor. We see nothing about primary care in this budget. We see nothing about medical schools. You know that is the long-term solution we need in Windsor, and it was not addressed in this budget.

I ask the members of this government to come to my riding to meet the people who can't access cancer care in a timely fashion, who can't get heart surgery in a timely fashion. I ask every member on that side of the House to come to my hospitals to watch the stress our nurses are under, the number of times and the hours they work overtime.

How many of our people have to continue to live in this manner while this government rides high on the hog and decides for themselves to give private vouchers to 4% of the student population in Ontario while students in my riding are doing without basics like textbooks?

These are the questions I put to the government and will continue to put to the government on behalf of the residents of Windsor. I want questions answered around the environment, how you could make cuts to the environment and then not be responsible for the outcome. We want basic services from this government, none of which have been delivered so far; a restructuring of health care that has only been a disservice to the people of Windsor; a reorganization of public education that has only done a disservice to real working families who live in Windsor West. Those are the people I represent, and I commit you to work on behalf of my constituents as well.

1800

### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** It being 6 of the clock, the motion to adjourn is deemed to have been made.

Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Davenport has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Citizenship concerning settlement and integration services and federal-provincial agreements. The member for Davenport has five minutes.

### IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I appreciate that, Mr Speaker.

I have a problem with the answer the minister gave us last week in this House and I will just quickly tell you why.

I had in front of me the guidebook to the Minister of Citizenship, which says that the core business of the Minister of Citizenship is to coordinate provincial policy and programs which support immigrants. I asked him consequently, how is this minister going to support immigrants when the whole world knows we have the best-educated pizza and taxi drivers in the world? We

have also a list of over 400 doctors who have passed their Ontario exams but are unable to practise, while 109 of our communities in Ontario are not getting sufficient doctors to care for them in their respective communities. Our list, I've also mentioned, includes foreign-trained technicians, scientists and engineers.

The Premier promised six years ago that foreign-trained professionals would get quick entry into professional life. So my question to the minister was, how is he helping them to quickly get into professional life? I had indicated that, according to the conference board, our province is in need of over 130,000 skilled workers. We have 130,000 unfilled jobs in Ontario at present—130,000 unfilled jobs. And what are we doing about this? The unemployment rate, then, for foreign-trained professionals is more than three times the national average. And you know what? Only 24% of those who have degrees and are foreign-trained have found jobs in their professions. In other words, there are a lot of other people out there who are looking to enter into professional life but are unable to do it.

How is this minister helping? If the minister's core business is to help and aid immigrants get into their professional life as quickly as possible, then it makes sense to me that he would at least communicate with the federal government. The federal government has offered to the Minister of Citizenship to sign an agreement that would indicate that the federal government would give up to—this is across the provinces—\$63.6 million for purposes of aiding foreign-trained professionals and others—settlement services, that is—to get that kind of money, or at least a good chunk of that money, to Ontario so that we would be able to help immigrants.

The minister then indicated that he was never approached. I have checked with the federal government in the meantime, and they said they have been approaching the Minister of Citizenship since 1997 to sign an agreement with the province of Ontario. The province of Ontario, through the Minister of Citizenship, has categorically refused to sign such an agreement.

I know the minister is here and I appreciate that. He will give us some reasons. But it's obvious his first answer to us was, "We were unable to sign an agreement because we have never been approached." Somebody is not telling the truth.

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors):** I didn't say that.

**Mr Ruprecht:** In that case, if the minister has not been approached—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** The member would have to withdraw that comment.

**Mr Ruprecht:** Mr Speaker, which comment is this?

**The Deputy Speaker:** "Truth."

**Mr Ruprecht:** Oh, truth. OK. The minister then, I would expect—

**The Deputy Speaker:** You need to withdraw it.

**Mr Ruprecht:** I withdraw that. Yes.

So what we have here, very quickly then, is that there is a settlement realignment negotiation committee. It's

presently ready to sit down with this minister to work out an agreement with the province of Ontario. We're asking this minister, is he willing to sit down with this committee so that we can have an Ontario-made plan for immigrant settlement services, that we can make it easier for foreign-trained professionals to get into Canada—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The minister has up to five minutes to reply.

**Hon Mr Jackson:** I want to thank my colleague the honourable member opposite for his question last week. I want to state very firmly that this government not only supports immigration expansion in our province, but wants to do all it can to assist foreign-trained professionals to find work so that they can contribute to the Ontario economy. In fact, we're probably one of the only governments in recent memory that responded to the Cummings report in the late 1980s that talked about wide-ranging changes to policies on access for professionals and trained individuals. This was unfortunately ignored by the past two provincial governments, and we're acting upon that now.

The real issue here is the federal government. We have repeatedly asked the feds to fix a system that is supposed to help immigrants and refugees and they keep dragging their feet on critical issues. In 1999, Ontario received 55% of all of Canada's immigration and yet the federal government only assisted or supported us with funding for 40% of the cost of settlement program dollars in our province. Our immigrants deserve better treatment from their own federal government if we're going to work together to find them jobs and to help them settle.

We continue to extend an open door policy. We warmly welcome these people so that they can bring their families to Ontario, enrol them in our schools and find work. Last week in the budget we announced \$12 million over the next three years to help foreign-trained professionals upgrade their skills. This includes engineering technicians, nurses and other health care professionals and teachers.

The honourable member criticizes our skilled labour policies. I think he shows he's not fully aware of what we're doing. We've created an unprecedented number of new high-tech jobs for skilled workers and we're working to make sure qualified workers have access to them.

Our record is clear. Only last October we established a self-financing academic credential assessment service to evaluate academic credentials of individuals educated outside of Canada. Operated by World Education Services in Toronto, it's a not-for-profit academic accreditation assessment agency. It provides fair, accurate and consistent assessment for foreign-educated qualifications. They've done 33 assessments from 19 different

countries and they're connected to over 130 countries around the world. This program is successful; immigrants are telling us that it's very successful.

This year, we'll spend about \$9 million on Job Connect, a program that helps newcomers prepare for the job market. The May 2000 budget of a year ago also committed \$3.5 million in bridge training for foreign-trained nurses and other professionals to help them meet Ontario's licensing standards. Each year, Ontario provides entry positions in training opportunities—and 36 international medical graduates, an increase of 50%. Our government has made that commitment.

We're doing everything we can to attract professionals to our province, but the federal government keeps throwing up roadblocks. Health care workers, engineers, high-tech professionals abroad who attempt to immigrate are turned off by all the federal red tape that's thrown in their way. The immigration system in Canada has had severe cuts.

The honourable member opposite has complained about skilled workers not finding jobs. He's wrong. The record is clear. We know how important a skilled workforce is to our province. We acknowledge that building and retaining a skilled workforce is important to our growth. After all, we have welcomed 100,000 new immigrants each year in the last five years. That's half a million people.

My own ministry has invested close to \$4 million annually in close to 100 community agencies for settlement services for new immigrants since 1996. Last year, the Ministry of Education spent \$40 million on adult education and English-as-a-second-language programs. The Ministry of Economic Development has immigrant investment and entrepreneur programs.

The honourable member alleges that I refused to sign the federal agreement. That is not true. The federal government offered to transfer its existing programs to Ontario. This would not be new funding to Ontario immigrants. It would simply be dollars already spent by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. There is no guarantee that the funding and the programs won't be cut after one year. Ontario taxpayers deserve better treatment from the federal government.

We are not sure the federal offer will still be there. That's why our immigrant activities have been designed to be good for immigrants and good for Ontario taxpayers. We believe that's good for Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This House stands adjourned. We will return at 6:45 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1811.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

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No. 16B

Nº 16B

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 15 May 2001**

**Mardi 15 mai 2001**



**Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr**

**Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr**

**Clerk  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 15 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 15 mai 2001

*The House met at 1845.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PUBLIC SERVICE STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA FONCTION PUBLIQUE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 14, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 25, An Act to amend the Public Service Act and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, 1993 / Projet de loi 25, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la fonction publique et la Loi de 1993 sur la négociation collective des employés de la Couronne.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The Chair recognizes the member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** As you know, Speaker, I had to start last night and I've got to finish up. I've only got 27 minutes left, so I'm going to try to be fast and get this compressed as much as I can. I want to thank you in advance for keeping me on a tight leash last night because from time to time I tended to digress and get into the bigger picture. But you want me to stay on the micro, and I shall with respect to Bill 25.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Exactly, Speaker, and I'm grateful to you. I am still reeling a little bit from this afternoon, though, when I asked the Attorney General to intervene on the plea bargaining being undertaken by the provincial prosecutor down in Burlington. The young Fleeton boy, as you know, 17 years old, was struck down and killed by an illegally loaded truck from a lumber company. An oversized load knocked him down and killed the 17-year-old boy doing a summer job. He'd just graduated from grade 12, June 14 last year. The trucking company was charged and we're advised today that tomorrow the dirty, evil deed is going to be done. Plea bargaining. The provincial prosecutor is going to withdraw the charge. A 17-year-old boy's life doesn't mean much. I asked the Attorney General to intervene and he didn't want to.

I guess I'd better move on to Bill 25, hadn't I? But I'm still very much shocked.

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** Point of order, Mr

Speaker: With respect, perhaps it's a point of privilege, more accurately. With the greatest of respect to my friend opposite, his recollection of the events of this afternoon are considerably different than those of the Hansard and mine. I said no such thing as he suggested I did, and I would ask him to withdraw that.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order. The Chair recognizes the member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr Kormos:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm trying to regain my composure. Bill 25—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** I am. I'm extremely upset, and I say this in all seriousness, about what's going to happen in the Burlington provincial offences court tomorrow when the crown's going to pull the charge and let this trucking company make a \$2,000 contribution. They're going to get a tax receipt for killing a kid.

OK, Bill 25, because that's what we do have to address this evening in the balance of my time. If you recall last night, I was referring to those rather neat, clever, somewhat unprecedented sections that create this incredible window of opportunity for the Ontario Provincial Police Association to take over up to—what?—2,500 OPSEU members working in provincial police stations across the province. I questioned the motive of the government in wanting those OPSEU members to become members of OPPA—which isn't a trade union; it's an association—because Bill 25 also, in this window of opportunity, gives OPPA artificial status for the briefest of times for the purpose of taking over these workers. It gives it the status of a trade union, which it isn't.

1850

Again, no quarrel with the OPPA. I put this to the OPSEU members who are the subject matter of this bill, those OPSEU members working at Ontario Provincial Police stations, to consider why it is this government wants them to belong to the OPPA rather than to OPSEU. Think about it for a minute, friends. Why would this government, your boss, want you, 2,500 of you and your AMAPCEO colleagues, a very small number and an even smaller number of professional engineers of Ontario, to belong to the OPPA rather than to OPSEU?

Here it is. OPSEU is at the forefront of the struggle, the fight with this government over privatization and this government's attack on the civil service, on the public sector here in Ontario. Leah Casselman and OPSEU have been there in the fight, have been right at the front, have been the vanguard in the fight against the privatization of corrections here in Ontario. Why does this government

want you OPSEU members in provincial police stations to belong to the Ontario Provincial Police Association rather than OPSEU?

I suggest to you, sisters and brothers, members of that sector of the public service—I have no qualms about calling working women and men “sisters and brothers”—that you should reflect hard, please, on the motives behind the government wanting you to become members of the OPPA rather than members of OPSEU with your thousands of other sisters and brothers and the power you have as a united group of working women and men, the power you’ve had and the power you’ve demonstrated in the fight against this government and its privatization agenda, because that’s what Bill 25 is really all about. It’s all about facilitating privatization.

We talked a whole lot about that last night and it’s inevitable that we talk about it more again today, you see, because approximately 20% of all public sector workers are unclassified, some 10,000 unclassified workers already, with almost another 50,000—not exactly 50,000, just shy of 50,000. Ten thousand are already unclassified.

I know what that means because I’ve met the workers, women and men in correctional institute after detention centre after jail after reformatory in this province, who are members of that unclassified workforce, kept out there hanging, lower rates of pay, no job security, far lesser entitlement to any benefits. I’ve watched those 10,000 workers in their workplaces and the insecurity they face on a daily basis, and now this government wants to change that term from a one-year term to a three-year term, plus it wants to create yet another whole group of what are really unclassified workers, but this bill calls them term classified. These term classified are going to be in a whole other group of workers in the public service who have no job security and who could be gone like that, with a snap of the fingers.

Another opposition member last night gave a pretty lengthy and skilful presentation on the fascinating history of the public service here in Ontario. One of the reasons why the public service has to have the job security that union membership provides for it, has to have what is the equivalent, I suppose, of what some might call tenure, is so that they can perform their jobs, ranging from the front-line service jobs at public offices all across the province to right in the ministries, policy people giving ministers advice and counsel, is so that they can perform those jobs without fear or retribution. It’s a very important concept to a professional public service.

You heard last night about the significant history of that public service here in Ontario, the pivotal point being—what?—around 1918, when governments of the day recognized the propensity for corruption in a public service that was patronage-based, in a public service that didn’t have the job security and the ability to be independent and the ability to give a minister or a deputy minister not only positive advice but negative and critical advice as well.

The term classified are going to be the elite of the unclassified workers, because the term classified are

going to have better benefits packages. They’re called “classified” because it appears they get most of the benefits of the classified but they’re term classified, which means they can be gone like that. They’re on contract. It’s all about contracting out, which is all about privatization. As the guy on the cooking show says, “It’s not rocket science.” It’s pretty obvious to anyone who takes a look at the legislation. These term classified positions are new.

This has been raised. This one stands out like a sore thumb in this bill. Do you remember I went back to Bill 26? Do you remember big Bill 26, omnibus Bill 26? It was the cornerstone of the privatization agenda, the privatization course here in the province of Ontario. It’s a long time ago now—Bill 26, the omnibus bill, the cornerstone. Since Bill 26 we’ve seen recurrent in bill after bill that deals with traditional public services the entry of the capacity to delegate significant power to the private sector, to people right outside the civil service, right outside the government bureaucracy, delegating that power so that private sector operators of prisons, of correctional institutions, of jails, of detention centres, of our social services system—witness Andersen Consulting with their new name. Tony Martin knows what it is. I, for the life of me, couldn’t remember it if you paid me. But Andersen Consulting, the multimillion-dollar beneficiary corporate friend, American-based—it’s a pattern.

This government is a big siphon of public monies out of Ontario into the United States to line the pockets of corporate, private, for-profit operators. They won’t even let those profits stay in the province of Ontario. Is it any surprise to anyone that the successful bidder on the Penetanguishene mega-jail ended up being American? The minister didn’t exactly take me into his confidence, but I’ll bet you dollars to doughnuts that the design of that jail was such that they knew—the government knew, the minister knew—from day one, from the get-go that it was only an American that was going to have in any way, shape or form the qualifications to operate that. They knew it was going to go to the American sector. They knew, darn it. They knew it, they knew it, they knew it. Sure as God made little apples, they knew it.

Those mega-jails like Penetanguishene and Lindsey and Maplehurst, the one down in Milton—custom built for the American corporate world with taxpayers’ dollars. We understand what happened; we dealt with this in estimates. The auditors highlighted—big yellow highlights in the auditor’s report. The government used taxpayers’ dollars to build these mega-jails when they could have, had they done things right—that’s what the auditor said, not me. I’m relying on what the auditor said. I trust the auditor. I’ve known the auditor for a long time now.

Heck, if you’re going to let the private sector make these huge profits off of our jails, why don’t you let them take the risk and make them build the jails to begin with? Why are you using taxpayers’ dollars to build the jails so the private sector can make the profits? It’s not very smart, is it? It’s not very clever. It’s not very fiscally responsible, is it? You know darn well it isn’t.

There's an interesting little twist in Bill 25. Again, this has been referred to a couple of times already by other speakers. It's a slick little thing in there that says that in the course of a grievance hearing, a criminal conviction will be conclusive proof that the person who was convicted did the things that he or she was convicted of. Now that in itself—I mean there's an argument to be made for that position. It certainly isn't clear in the law in this province, but what people should be very tuned into is that's a matter that's being dealt with by our courts right now. It's before the Court of Appeal currently. Look, and I'm not going to—no, I will. For a minute I thought I wouldn't but, darn it, I will. The scenario as it's described to me is where the griever, who had been convicted, attempted to argue, and successfully, before the grievance settlement board, that the conviction that he endured was in fact a wrongful conviction.

**1900**

Now before I get people jumping up all over the place saying how dare I suggest there are wrongful convictions, please, take a look at some recent history here in this country, in this province. Ask Mr Morin about wrongful conviction.

The grievance settlement board held that the griever, an employee, could argue that the conviction was wrong. Again, this didn't just come down from the sky out of nowhere. It has long been unsettled law, as I'm told it by lawyers, that a criminal conviction in and of itself has not clearly been conclusive proof of the acts that would have given rise purportedly to the conviction. So the grievance settlement board adopted that argument in law.

The government undertook a judicial review—government as boss, as employer. Think about this, you folks who are being called upon—oh, this window of opportunity—to be a part of OPPA. It's up to you to decide and it's up to the OPPA to argue their case, although let's understand that at the end of the day that process itself is going to be a far cry from the fair and democratic thing that this government says it will be. But the Divisional Court and the judicial review reversed the decision of the grievance settlement board, fair enough, and the union, of course, acting on behalf of their employee, as unions do—that's their job and they do it well and OPSEU does it as well as anybody, if not better than most—then appealed that. That's before the Court of Appeal. The hearing was held back only on April 24, 2001.

Why does this government show such disdain for Ontario's appellate court? Why does this government persist in showing such disregard for the rule of law? I have no idea how the Court of Appeal is going to rule on that. I'm looking forward to their judgment, and I'm prepared to live with their ruling on it, as to whether or not a criminal conviction constitutes conclusive evidence of the behaviour that would have given rise to that conviction, the axe—I think lawyers call it the delict.

Incredible arrogance: this bill should be opposed on that basis alone. This government doesn't like workers. It mocks them, boos them around every chance it gets. It likes unionized workers even less and it likes low-income

workers even less. It doesn't like the Court of Appeal either. This government hasn't got a very impressive track record in the courts, has it? Spent a whole lot taxpayers' money—a whole lot, man, and still spending it.

I'm told the lawyers for the Premier, who's not here—he's in Lausanne, Switzerland, by the way. I've never been to Lausanne. I understand it's a high-priced town. You're talking about bucks.

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):** It has a nice casino.

**Mr Kormos:** Casino in Lausanne? See, I've never been to Lausanne, never mind a casino.

OK, he's in Lausanne, and I'm not sure, but didn't fly tourist.

**Mr Wayne Wetlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** On a point of order, Speaker: It is quite inappropriate for the member from Niagara Centre to be commenting on the location of the Premier right now, especially when he's in Lausanne to lend support to Toronto's Olympic bid.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is a point order. I'm listening carefully to the member's context and what he's saying, and I would like to hear him out. The Chair recognizes the member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr Kormos:** Thank you kindly, Speaker. I appreciate your direction, your guidance.

Look, the fact that the Premier's in Lausanne is really of no relevance, I suppose, to Bill 25, but it was something I felt compelled to note because I've never been to Lausanne. Most of my folks down in Niagara Centre have never been to Lausanne either.

**Interjection:** Neither have I.

**Mr Kormos:** I know.

**The Acting Speaker:** I fail to see how that particular city in the world is brought into the context of Bill 25. So I would like to get to Bill 25.

**Mr Kormos:** Thank you, Speaker, very much.

I'm really concerned about the disdain that this government shows for the Court of Appeal. They want to politicize judges. Is this the message to the Court of Appeal: "It doesn't matter what you rule because we're not concerned that the Court of Appeal in Ontario says what the law is in Ontario; we're just going to ram it through by legislation, even though it's before the Court of Appeal and a judgment is due any day"?

We should be opposing Bill 25 for that section alone because (1) it ignores the reality, yes, of wrongful convictions; (2) it ignores the fact that people plead guilty for any number of reasons. They do; that's the reality of it. People plead guilty for any number of reasons. Dare I say that the vast majority of people who plead guilty of course are guilty, the vast majority, but there are a whole number of reasons why people plead guilty. I think it's an incredible affront and some real heavy-handedness on the part of this government to want to circumvent the Ontario Court of Appeal and to tell those honourable justices there, lords, that they are irrelevant to this government. This government doesn't care that the Court of Appeal is

in the midst of a process determining the legality of that issue. It simply doesn't care. It could care less.

I should mention that you're going to hear later this evening from the member for Trinity-Spadina and the member from Hamilton. The member for Trinity-Spadina is appearing on CKLN radio from 7:30 to 8, talking about public education. That's Rosario Marchese on CKLN radio from 7:30 to 8 this evening and people, I'm sure, will be tuning in to listen to what the member from Trinity-Spadina has to say. I encourage people, because by the time 7:30 comes it's going to be in rotation to a Tory speaker, and I'm sorry, if you were here yesterday—there ought to be a standing order against boring speeches, against tedious speeches. There isn't. I looked through the standing orders. I've been looking through the standing orders a lot lately for all sorts of little things. I just thought I'd spend more time reading the standing orders. I had to interrupt my study of the standing orders to take a look at Bill 25, of course, and the assistance I got from OPSEU. But I've been reading the standing orders a whole lot. There's nothing in there about boring speeches. In five minutes, when the rotation goes on, people will surely wish there was.

New Democrats are not supporting this legislation. New Democrats are voting against this legislation. New Democrats are standing with sisters and brothers who are members of OPSEU, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, just as we stood with them on the fight against the privatization of jails, stood with them across the province, in every city of this province where this government has decided to turn yet another publicly built jail over to the private sector so that the private sector, inevitably American, can make money off their operation. New Democrats have been there with OPSEU members and with members of those communities fighting that.

1910

I'm concerned that the government figures that they can ram this through because it's just a hodgepodge of little amendments here and there. The government speakers refer to this as change that's long overdue after 120 years. Come on, let's be honest about this. There's but a handful of government members who have been here for 120 years. The vast majority of them would have no idea what transpired over the course of the last 20 years, never mind the course of the last 10. The vast majority would have no idea of what transpired over the course of the last 10 years. So I'm fearful for what's happening to the public service with this legislation. I'm fearful for what's happening to public institutions that people have built with their hard labour and with their investment by way of tax dollars.

Let's understand that this government thinks that tax dollars should be used to support private, more often than not for-profit schools. Yes, this government has a real unique spin. I guess it's change, right? It's change that this government should be spending public tax dollars to support private and in oh so many cases for-profit schools. Nuts, isn't it? Wacko. This government thinks

that it should give tax breaks to the wealthiest people in this province while it downloads more and more on to municipalities, where the folks where I come from, senior citizens, hard-working people, women and men doing their best, struggling on a day-to-day basis, trying to keep their homes—I'm talking about people who have paid for their homes trying to keep them, senior citizens who are risking homelessness because of the downloading on to municipalities—5% and 10% property tax increases across the board. There are municipalities that are going to be higher, aren't there? We know it. We know that for a fact and we know who's responsible for it. This government is responsible for it, and fewer and fewer services available too.

We're at the cusp: the imminent, real danger of broad-scale privatization of those things that were built and owned by the people of this province being pilfered from them so that this government can hand them over to their corporate friends, corporations that I tell you are no friends of the folks like the folks where I come from down in Welland or Thorold or Pelham or South St Catharines; corporations that have bought into the agenda of globalization and that have called upon this government, and this government does their bidding.

It's like the little RCA mascot, the little dog that sat beside the Victrola; you know, "his master's voice." Do you remember that? I remember that, heck, and I'm not as old as you are. I remember that, the little dog that sat beside the Victrola, RCA, "his master's voice." This government is the lapdog of those corporations. Those corporations say, "Reduce wages, lower the minimum wage." That's what this government has done by virtue of not raising it for the last six years—\$6.85 an hour. You know, reduce government so that government doesn't stand in the way of corporations bulldozing their way through and generating more and more profits, inevitably not to stay in the jurisdictions where those profits are made. That's what they say to this government, and this government says, "Oh, your wish is our command."

And consult? This government did not consult with the very workers that it's attacking, nor should we naïvely expect it to. This government daren't say that it consulted with the public service that it's placing under direct attack with this Bill 25.

We're voting against it. Full committee hearings and at the end of the day, vote it away.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):** I'd like to respond to one area that the member spoke on and that is with respect to his insisting that he stand with his brothers and sisters with OPSEU, as opposed to what the intent of the legislation is. It's called democracy in the workplace. It's called being able to choose between unions. Certainly what this act is trying to do is to permit civilian employees of the Ontario Provincial Police to join the Ontario Provincial Police Association or vote, indeed, with respect to OPSEU. My friend, of course, the speaker over here, says, "Oh, you only have one choice."

You only have one union to choose from." That's not what the bill is saying. We're saying you have a secret ballot to vote.

In fact, this party, the New Democratic Party, doesn't believe in the secret ballot. They don't believe in that. They believe in the days where the union leaders would stand around and make notes as to who was voting for what. That's what they did. You were pressured into voting how the union leaders were recommending. That was their style, and certainly when this party was in office, that was their position. "Don't have a secret ballot. We can't have that. We can't have democracy in the union movement. We can only have dictatorship. We can only have"—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Tilson:** Exactly. The man says, "Oh." The member from Hamilton says, "Oh."

But that's what you do. You were one of the ones to push it. You still push it. You still push for open ballots, where the union leaders can say, "Oh, that guy over there is going to vote for this and that guy is going to vote for that." Then you say, "Look what happened." That's not democracy. This bill is all about democracy in the workplace.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** Of course the last speaker takes a very isolated little portion of the bill as if it's the entire bill, when we all know that what the bill really deals with is the privatization of the civil service. That's what it deals with—giving you the outright power to privatize the civil service.

It's rather startling that almost 25% of the people who work for us right now are on some sort of contract. At one time the people who worked in our civil service were proud of the fact that they worked for the province of Ontario. The morale was high. I can tell you that among the many civil servants I deal with in the Kingston area, and there are quite a few of them in the various ministries etc, I don't think the morale has ever been lower. I think that people are fearful for their jobs on an ongoing basis. There's more demanded from them, there are fewer of them, and it's getting tougher for them. What this bill in effect does is it allows individuals such as deputy ministers to privatize the civil service even further.

It's very interesting, the wording that is used by the minister in his own press release. It says, "It allows the ministry to recruit specialist contract workers for time-limited, project-specific work for up to three years, with possibility of renewal." The terminology that's used here almost makes it sound as if these people want to be on contract, that perhaps they don't want to work there on a permanent basis: "with the possibility of renewal." If we want to be proud of our civil servants, if we want to boost the morale, build up the morale which is needed in order to implement the policies that the government of the day brings forward, the worst thing we could do is privatize the civil service.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the remarks of my colleague from Niagara Centre. Let me say that he

did spend a great deal of time, and with great passion, talking about democracy.

To hear the comments from the government side attacking unions for a lack of democracy and then stereotyping some caricature of a union leader is pretty sad, as opposed to the member from Niagara Centre, who was talking about real democracy. The government member across the way who commented on this is the same member who participated in a government that changed the election laws of the province for the first time ever without the agreement of all the parties in the House—never been done before, unilaterally brought in by a minister sitting in the House today and supported by the very member who wants to talk about democracy.

At the same they changed the election laws, they changed the way you finance elections so that corporations—guess what: stand back for the shock—can contribute more money than they used to be able to. And this member of the government wants to talk about democracy? The fact of the matter is that this member sat here through all the years that your government has eliminated rights of opposition members one after another, taken away. The member for Niagara Centre talked about Bill 26. That was the beginning of taking away the rights of democracy in this place, because so much now is decided by regulation. Regulations are not decided—

1920

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** I hear a former cabinet minister talking. She will know that regulations are passed in cabinet without the media. Here in the House, you've got to take your actions in front of the cameras and give us an opportunity to express an opposing point of view. All those undemocratic actions were perpetrated by this government. You ought to listen to the member for Niagara Centre more often rather than condemning him. All those regulations—

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** As I listen to the members of the opposition and the member of that other party, the third party, it's amazing that for the last six years, everything we have done as a government has been apocalyptic, to listen to them. The sun was not going to rise the next day.

Let's understand here: term classified workers. We're making a change from one year to three years before renewal, because term classified workers want some level of security. These are people who are in the external world, the private sector. We need them because of their high skills, their technological and professional expertise. We need them, but we don't need them as part of the public service for 10, 15, 20 or 30 years. Why would we want to bring them on for 10, 20 or 30 years and build up a cost to the taxpayer when we only need them for three years, with the option of renewing? They want some security. That's why we want to bring them in for a possibility of up to three years.

They talk about 10,000 unclassified employees in the civil service. We have 60,000 classified employees. We cannot set out to destroy the civil service. What I don't

understand is that the critic in the Liberal Party and the NDP critic from Niagara Centre who spoke were fully briefed by our ministry, and they are trying to paint things in this bill that aren't there.

What about the OPP? What about the civilian employees in the OPP? Hundreds of them have written to us, have asked us to give consideration to this. Is this not democracy? Are we not permitted to extend that to them?

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Niagara Centre has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Kormos:** As a matter of fact, my fear is that it isn't democracy.

I read Eric Kierans newest book just the other day, a biography, written with the help of a ghost writer. Eric Kierans was talking about the phenomenon of global corporatism, this new, enhanced level of capitalism. How do you like it so far? He wrote it before the Quebec City summit. New Democrats were there. This caucus was there with its leader and with its federal leadership and its colleagues in the federal caucus and other provincial leaders.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Listen, be very careful, because Eric Kierans, who is no New Democrat, who is no socialist, is a capitalist's capitalist. His background is in the corporate world. He was head of the Montreal Stock Exchange. He made considerable amounts of money developing corporations.

Eric Kierans speaks very specifically in his book, Remembering, about the very phenomenon that tens of thousands of young people, workers and friends were protesting in Quebec City. Eric Kierans says this—and we had better pay close attention because it isn't Buzz Hargrove saying it, it isn't Howard Hampton saying it, it isn't Judy Rebick saying it. This is Eric Kierans. He says that if this movement of global corporatism, this development in capitalism is allowed to go forward, the inevitable result—Eric Kierans said this—is “fascism or chaos.”

When Sinclair Stevens, Tory of all Tories, no left winger, says, after being in Quebec City, “I never thought I would see this kind of police-state tactic in Canada.... The police action in Quebec City, under orders from our government...was an assault on all our freedoms,” my friends, we had better start being very careful. This government is engaged in the very agenda that was being promoted in Quebec City. We know what it is. People had better oppose it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton):** I'm very pleased to join in the debate on the bill before us, which is Bill 25, An Act to amend the Public Service Act and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, 1993. I want to repeat that and make that clear, because that's what we're debating here tonight: the Public Service Act and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, 1993.

Accountability is the first area I want to talk about. Accountability is what good government is all about.

Reviewing the Public Service Act, an act that is more than 120 years old and does not support the demands of today's evolving business needs, is part of our government's commitment to be more accountable to the needs of taxpayers. No substantive changes have been made to the Public Service Act in 40 years. Our government is taking action to correct this situation and make sure that our workforce is in a position to deliver the quality services the public expects and deserves.

This is only part of a broader series of measures that the government has taken and will continue to take to bring accountability to the taxpayers' dollars that are spent on public programs every day.

Changes in the Public Service Act will help make government programs more accountable to the people of Ontario by giving government the flexibility required to reduce the waste and inefficiency involved with administering government programs. It would allow for more flexible and dynamic working arrangements to address the needs of taxpayers which are not adequately addressed through single ministries.

By the delegation of some deputy ministerial authority, it will help the civil service streamline its operations while keeping all parties involved accountable to the government and the people of Ontario. It is important to note that there is a difference between delegation of authority and delegation of responsibility. All people who are affected by this will still be accountable to the deputy minister, the government and the people of Ontario.

This act, if passed, would allow deputy ministers to delegate authority, providing more flexibility in reporting lines. For example, the Deputy Minister of Health and Long-Term Care would be able to delegate supervision authority of some employees to a manager in the Ministry of Colleges, Training and Universities when working collaboratively on a project to increase the number of medical school graduates.

Under the current legislation, this would not be possible. Deputy ministers can delegate authority to managers within their own ministry, but not externally. With challenges that require solutions involving more than one ministry, the current act makes it necessary to have several reporting lines where only one is necessary. This creates an unnecessary level of bureaucracy and more unneeded expenses without any value added to the taxpayer. This is not good value for the money, and with scarce resources we know that it is necessary to do more with less, just as families have been doing for years. This is being accountable for the precious resources we deal with. After all, government does not have any money of its own; it all belongs to the taxpayers.

The value added in this portion of the legislation provides for a more efficient and effective public service that is more responsive to the needs of the community. It will allow the government and public service to approach challenges in the innovative and creative fashion that taxpayers want. Taxpayers don't care about bureaucratic hurdles; they want results and value for their money, and we are going to provide just that.

These changes are only part of a wider approach by this government to bring more accountability to the taxpayers' dollars being spent on public programs every day. It is being accountable by delivering programs that adapt to the changing needs of Ontarians and taking innovative approaches to the challenges and pressures of delivering top-notch services in the light of increasing fiscal pressures.

The focus is not just on accountability; there are also issues of efficiency. Efficiency, effectiveness and reliability are the cornerstones of an excellent public service. Proposed amendments to the Public Service Act and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act focus on how to help the Ontario public service deliver services the taxpayers of this province expect and deserve.

### **1930**

Real people and families all across this province are facing pressure on their own finances. They look for ways to get more for less. If they can spend less and get more, they do it. Government should be no different. In fact, it must be exactly the same, because government does not have its own money to spend. It only spends the money of taxpayers, and we must always strive to be more efficient and deliver valuable services which give taxpayers the greatest value for the dollar.

One challenge to achieving greater efficiency is attracting and retaining people in the public sector who can deliver high-quality programs. These people often need to have specialized expertise, which is in scarce supply and obviously in high demand. If we are to deliver on taxpayer expectations, we need to be able to attract and retain top talent that can make things happen.

The current Public Service Act makes it difficult for the public service to attract this talent, especially at executive levels and in high-tech areas. These legislative changes will allow us to make more attractive job offers to new workers with specialized skills the public service needs.

Updates to the Public Service Act include increasing initial appointments to the unclassified service up to a maximum of three years before they need to renew.

The bill also creates a category of "term classified" employees. This will help ministries recruit workers with highly specialized skills for time-limited project work. This adds an element of flexibility and adaptability which is needed to do business in today's fast-paced work world. It also allows the government to take the greatest advantage of specialized talent which is needed for specific projects but not necessarily on a permanent basis. These employees may have an opportunity to renew their contracts after three years, where appropriate. They will be entitled to many of the benefits currently available only to full-time classified employees. This will make the Ontario public service more attractive to today's highly specialized and mobile workforce who are looking for new challenges and stimulating opportunities. Nothing in this bill overrides any existing provisions in any collective agreements; nor does it propose to change any of the classified positions in the public service.

As I stated earlier, it has been more than 40 years since the Public Service Act's last substantial update. The legislation dates back more than 122 years, and parts of it no longer meet current and future business challenges.

As the main legislative framework for human resource management in the Ontario public service, the Public Service Act sets out the authority for activities in areas such as recruitment, conditions of employment and rules of conduct. It governs the employment of all civil servants, unclassified public servants and crown employees designated under this act.

We are taking action to substantially update the act and to make sure this legislation supports what taxpayers expect from their government: greater accountability and better services. The legislative changes we're looking at will help the public service deliver the top-notch services the people of Ontario demand. The changes will provide more efficiency and flexibility and ensure we have a workforce that can respond to changing business needs.

Accountability, which I've spoken about, efficiency, which I have spoken about, and democracy are the cornerstones of these legislative amendments. We cannot meet the needs of the people of Ontario if we're not flexible enough to adapt to their changing needs. We cannot be efficient if we do not modernize employment and recruitment practices. We cannot be democratic if we do not give people a choice.

As you know, the Ontario public service is experiencing challenges attracting and recruiting the talented and skilled people we need for time-limited, project-based work. This issue is particularly acute in executive recruitment in specialized areas, such as information technology. We have an obligation to recruit and retain the best employees possible to deliver our programs and services. At the same time, we need to have a flexible workforce to support time-limited initiatives. New provisions in the bill will help us do that. They include increasing initial appointments to the unclassified public service of up to a maximum of three years before renewal is required. Current provisions limit initial appointments to the unclassified public service of up to only one year.

Increasing the initial term of appointment will make the public service a more attractive workplace to external workers and help us retain the skills necessary to deliver the services the public needs and deserves.

New provisions also include creating a category of term classified employees. Ministries will be able to hire these employees in exceptional circumstances where highly specialized skills are needed for time-limited project work. Term classified employees may be appointed for up to three years, with the opportunity to renew for an additional period of time. This will allow ministries to recruit individuals with the required skills and make offers for temporary positions more attractive.

Hiring employees for specific terms is an example of how we can remain committed to meeting the needs of taxpayers. By removing unnecessary layers of bureaucracy, we can focus on delivering our services to the public. Part of the legislative updates to make the Ontario

public service more efficient includes providing greater flexibility to civil servants' reporting relationships while remaining accountable to the taxpayers who foot the bills.

This includes situations in which deputy ministers will be allowed, subject to the approval of the Civil Service Commission, to delegate their authority under the Public Service Act to non-public servants. Currently, a deputy minister may only delegate his or her authority to a public servant in his or her ministry. This limitation was identified as a barrier for cross-ministry initiatives and partnerships with other governments and the private sector.

Let me be clear. Allowing greater delegation of a deputy minister's authority does not mean we are reneging on our commitment to be accountable to taxpayers. We may be delegating authority, but our government is still ultimately responsible for the quality of services it delivers. In fact, the new provisions in this bill will allow public servants to be managed more effectively when working in these partnership arrangements.

As you know, our government has been exploring, and continues to explore, partnerships with the broader public service or the private sector to provide better service to the people of Ontario and make sure we are using tax dollars appropriately.

With the creation of SuperBuild, Ontario signalled its intention to increase its use of public-private partnerships and to provide the best value for Ontario's taxpayers. But the government can only review its services and assets and allow for public-private partnerships if it has the flexibility to delegate authority.

At the same time, we need to establish open, fair and transparent processes to ensure that the public's interest is protected, and that is exactly what changes in the Public Service Act allow us to do. These changes also include providing workplace democracy for Ontario Provincial Police civilian employees. By amending the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act and the Public Service Act, civilian employees of the Ontario Provincial Police will be able to choose, on a one-time-only basis, whether to continue to be represented by their current bargaining agent or by the Ontario Provincial Police Association.

Hundreds of these employees have expressed their wish to join the OPPA, which would allow them to be in the same situation as their municipal police sector counterparts. Under the Police Services Act, civilian employees at municipal forces are represented by their respective municipal police associations. Legislative amendments to the Public Service Act will provide OPP civilian employees with a democratic choice. It is a matter of fairness and openness in the workplace that employees have the right to be able to choose the bargaining agent that best meets their needs.

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As it is currently structured under the act, the purpose—and I'll focus on the amendments—is to allow the Ontario Provincial Police Association, which currently

acts as the bargaining agent for collective bargaining purposes for police officers in the Ontario Provincial Police, an opportunity to become certified as the exclusive bargaining agent for civilian employees working within the Ontario Provincial Police. These civilian employees are currently part of three different bargaining units: one group is represented by the Association of Management, Administrative and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario; another group by the Ontario Public Service Employees Union; and the final group by a trade union known as the Professional Engineers in the Government of Ontario. These amendments give the Ontario Provincial Police Association an opportunity to make three separate applications to the Ontario Labour Relations Board in order to have civilian employees excluded from their existing bargaining units and included in a newly established bargaining unit and to have itself certified as the exclusive bargaining agent for the new bargaining unit.

The opportunity to make these applications is time limited. Each application must be made within the last three months of the collective agreement, applicable to employees in their respective bargaining units and specified in the bill. The procedure relating to the application for certification and the representation vote are set out in sections 28.0.1 and 28.0.8 of the act. What we see here is a procedure for an application for certification to the Labour Relations Board and a representation vote for these civilians in terms of who they want to be represented by. In essence, instead of being represented by three separate bargaining units, they can be represented by one bargaining unit involved through the OPPA.

What we're talking about here is a community of interest with the group that they would be represented by and consistent with how the municipal sector works with respect to police forces. If the civilian employees vote in favour of joining the OPPA, they will be placed in a separate bargaining unit under the Public Service Act and will be represented by the OPPA.

This is an updating of the Public Service Act, not a complete overhaul of the legislation. The Management Board Secretariat consulted with ministries and bargaining agents last year, I understand, on a number of items that were identified as needing an update.

Updating the Public Service Act removes the barriers that hinder the government in adopting the dynamic needs of the people of Ontario. It enables the government to move with the times in established practices and reflect those commonly used in the modern workplaces.

There's one other area I want to focus on under the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, and it deals with some practices that are there. These amendments also apply to the Public Service Act, specifically the Public Service Grievance Board which deals with the Public Service Act and the Grievance Settlement Board which deals with grievances obviously under the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act. These changes that are being proposed deal with the following.

It says that the Grievance Settlement Board would be prevented "from requiring the employment of an em-

ployee in a position involving direct responsibility for or an opportunity for contact with a wider range of persons than previously where the employee has been found to have used more than minimum force against or to have sexually molested a person."

Another amendment states that, "unless an appeal is still available, a conviction for a Criminal Code offence constitutes conclusive proof in a grievance proceeding before the Grievance Settlement Board"—or the Public Service Grievance Board—"that the convicted person committed the act or omission that gave rise to the conviction." That's substantially a procedural change.

I'm pleased to speak on the bill and those are my comments.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further comments and questions? The Chair recognizes the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane, New Liskeard, Cobalt, Haileybury.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for that detailed description of my riding. I appreciate that.

It's very interesting, this act that the government is bringing forward, because it really takes a shotgun approach at all the public sector institutions across Ontario, ignoring some of the very good work that many of the institutions across the province have done.

I'll give an example of the Ontario Hospital Association, of all the hospitals across the province. They were the first institution in Ontario to produce report cards, and they have already produced report cards in 1998 and 1999. Ontario hospitals conducted the largest patient satisfaction survey in North America. Ontario hospitals continue to expand their report cards. Their report cards in 2001 will be released in a series of reports as follows to the public: acute care services this summer; emergency department in November 2001; complex continuing care, November 2001; and some feasibility studies on mental health, rehabilitation, women's health, nursing and population health in December of this year. They are putting forward a very comprehensive accountability schedule for the people of Ontario. Working in partnership with the University of Toronto and other research partners, the hospitals of Ontario have prepared comprehensive public report cards on hospital performance in four key areas: patient satisfaction, clinical utilization of outcomes, financial performance and condition, and system change and integration.

That's all to say that the imposition of this act on top of what the Ontario Hospital Association is doing is really going to create a lot of red tape, something I thought this government was quite allergic to and wanted to rid themselves of. This is going to duplicate many of the operating plan processes that the Ontario Hospital Association has put into place and it's going to create a confusing parallel structure. I would say to the government that they should be aware of what some of the Ontario institutions are doing in their way of accountability.

**Mr Christopherson:** I'm pleased to respond to the speech by the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford.

He said during the course of his speech—and I'm paraphrasing, but this is pretty close—that the government finds they are having difficulty attracting and recruiting employees. Quelle surprise. Given the way you treat public sector workers in this province, I'm not the least bit surprised you've got problems attracting anybody to work here. Do you know what the word is out on the street in terms of being a nurse in Ontario, because of you, directly making that connection? Being a teacher, being anybody anywhere in the public sector now is seen to be the last place in the world that you'd want to be. You shouldn't be the least bit surprised, nor should you try to offer up your need to recruit people and your inability to attract people as a reason for bringing in this legislation, when you're the one who set the tone that has sent out the message, "This is not a good employer."

You also talked about the fact that there are times when you need to bring in experts on contract, and that's why you've brought up this new category. By the way, it's interesting to take note that during the negotiations with OPSEU last time, you, the government, the employer, had a demand on the table that you could hire new employees who would be immune from any bumping for three years. That sounds an awful lot like something we have here in front of us. Maybe you're just trying to achieve the same thing without having to negotiate it.

But at the end of the day, everybody's facing the issue of hiring people on contract. When are you going to get caught up with the idea that people who work on contract need more benefit coverage and need more rights protected in law? There's an answer to the problem that you've spent no time on.

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**Mr Wettkaufer:** I'd like to say that the member from Simcoe-Barrie-Bradford has exhibited a very good understanding of this bill and I'd like to compliment him for it, contrary to the critic from the Liberal Party, who last night suggested that such things as personal information and an integrated human resources sector could be shared outside of ministries, when it was quite specific in the act that it can only be shared inside and between ministries; it cannot be shared outside of the ministry.

The member from Timiskaming-Cochrane talked about the hospitals and the universities and all the red tape. Hospitals and universities are not run by this government; hospitals and universities have their own boards of directors. They are not even affected by this piece of legislation.

This piece of legislation addresses job-specific, project-based, time-limited jobs or appointments in exceptional circumstances only. It will not affect collective agreements between union and employer. I don't know what the problem is. I don't know why we can't seem to get through to these people over here, who have been totally briefed by ministry staff and don't seem to get the message.

We talk about the term "limited employee" as well. It expands benefit coverage. We're not trying to eliminate

benefits to these people, but the government, like private employers, from time to time needs to hire highly skilled expertise. That could only be for a one-year or a two-year or a three-year period; we're saying up to a three-year period. What is the problem with that? The taxpayer appreciates it. I don't know why the people on that side of the House don't appreciate that.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** What I'm worried about, when you talk about, "Who are they going to hire outside?"—the first name that comes to mind is Tom Long. The last time I remember Tom Long getting a contract—maybe the energy critic for the Liberal Party can help me—was it not a quarter of a million dollars? It was a contract of that kind that Tom Long, who is the president of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario—

*Interjection:* Leslie Noble.

**Mr Bradley:** Leslie Noble was another who was in the hierarchy of the Conservative campaign. She had a huge contract from the government of Ontario. This wasn't paid for by the Conservative Party; this was paid for, as is the \$235 million in government advertising, out of the pockets of taxpayers in this province.

I know that if Walter Robinson of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation is listening, he'll be concerned about those contracts, first of all, and the \$235 million that has been spent on self-serving, blatantly partisan government advertising.

I'm concerned when I see this privatization. There are people lining up now; let me tell you, there are people from the LCBO worried about this bill, because there are a lot of Tories out there rubbing their hands, saying, "We would love to get our hands on those stores that the LCBO has at the present time." We know there's an example of a public agency which has made a genuine effort to be as consumer-friendly as possible, to do as good a job as possible. Unfortunately, with this legislation, with the general thrust of the government, private is good; public is bad. That's most unfortunate.

This bill is going to be used, in my view, to assist the government in doing in the workers of this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Tascona:** I want to thank all the members for commenting on this piece of legislation, in particular the member from Hamilton West and the member from Kitchener Centre. They actually did comment on the bill.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Tascona:** I want to take that back, yes. The other ones didn't comment on it.

The member from Timiskaming-Cochrane talks about a shotgun approach and he focuses on anything but what I'm talking about, which is the Public Service Act and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act.

About setting the tone, the member from Hamilton West is right; everything else he said I don't think was even relevant to what I'm speaking about tonight. We set the tone with respect to recruiting and attracting employees, providing for flexibility with respect to the

public service, flexibility to do project work, flexibility to attract high information technology employees, flexibility to do cross-ministerial work.

I'm glad the member from St Catharines joined us. Too bad he didn't join me when I was speaking. I will say this: what I was speaking about was that we are dealing with a piece of legislation, the Public Service Act, which has not been amended for over 40 years, longer than the member from St Catharines has been here, I think. If I'm wrong, let me know, because I will stand to be corrected.

I will say that the changes being put in place deal with flexibility; they deal with accountability; they deal with democracy in terms of what will be done with the civilians who will have an opportunity, through the Ontario Provincial Police Association, to deal with their bargaining rights. Obviously it is a splintered unit at the moment, but I will say this: it will reflect what is the practice out in the municipal police services.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** I will be sharing my time on debate on Bill 25 with the member for Kingston and the Islands.

I would like to open with the comment that I am very curious that the government would be presenting the idea of continuing to privatize services for the people of Ontario and that they would not have paid attention to what I have to believe they are hearing from people in their ridings. I am certainly hearing from the people in Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington with regard to those government services that have been downsized and privatized that they are not getting better service—far from it.

I talk to farmers in my riding who used to be able to go to the next town to the Ministry of Ag and Food office with their crop or a sample of grain when there was a problem with it and they don't know what the blight was—

**Mr Bradley:** What happened to that office?

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** It's closed. It's gone. They have nowhere to get direction, advice or support. There is no private service in my community that is offering that service to the farmers in my area. That's what I'm hearing from them. Have you not listened to the people in the province of Ontario? Do you not understand that there are important services they need that they're not receiving?

I'm also reminded by the people I speak to throughout my riding about the fact that Ministry of Transportation services are not what they once were. People tell me that in the wintertime now during storms, "We wait hours before major highways are cleared of snow, before salt and sand get put on major highways." In some locations, county and municipal roads are plowed long before the provincial highways are. That's a service that is no longer looked after by people who are employees of the province. A private company is looking after those services.

The member from Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton talked about the difficulty in attracting and recruiting people to the public service, and little wonder. The best you can offer these people is a three-year contract. If you live in a community and you want to buy a house and you go to the bank for a mortgage and they say, "Where do you work?" and you say, "I have a contract with the government for three years," chances are that you're probably not going to be very favourably considered for a mortgage, or even a car payment. These people are looking for some stability, some guarantee that if they loan an individual money, there is going to be a source of income there for a fixed period of time, more than three years. Car loans now go beyond a three-year period; they are usually four- or five-year loans; certainly mortgages are.

I live in a community where a very valuable government service was located the Ministry of Natural Resources. The ministry in my community of Tweed employed some 48 employees. That office was closed, and many of the services that those people provided are either no longer provided by the government or are provided on a contract basis by the same people who worked for the ministry but whose roles became redundant and they lost their jobs. Now they are contracted by the government to do the same service, but they don't receive the benefits. That has an impact on their family and that has an impact on the economy of my community. My community is dying because those committed, dedicated professionals are no longer there, or if they are there, they're not compensated fairly, as they once were for the quality of work they did.

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I would be very interested to understand from the members of this government who give us sermons all the time about accountability to the taxpayer, this same government that has doubled the size of its cabinet staff—you've done that. You've doubled the size. That's a fact. The minister of—what are you minister of now? I forget. On the other side of the House there are wincing about, "Can this be true?" It is true. It is a fact. It's a matter of the public record that you have doubled the size of your staff. I would be very interested to know how many of the people that you have added to your employment you have added on a three-year basis, on a term contract.

**Mr Bradley:** A big pay increase too for the political staff.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** My colleague from St Catharines has reminded me as well—a very important point—that not only have they increased staff, they've increased the salaries of staff. We hear all about accountability to the taxpayer, and yet you don't walk your own talk.

This is about service to the people of Ontario. I'm hearing from people in my riding that the example they see from the government is not the reality they're experiencing in our communities. People in my riding don't believe they are getting better services when they are contracted out or done on a term basis. They know the people who worked for the various ministries, the

commitment they had, the contribution they made at their place of work and the contribution they made within their towns and villages in Ontario. Instead of the government stepping back and assessing the damage that's taken place, the reduction in service, the reduction in quality of service the people now encounter—and I'm sure you're getting the same calls I'm getting in my constituency office about calling a ministry office and they can never get a warm body at the end of the phone. It's all voice mail. They complain about the fact they used to be able to go to the Ministry of Transportation office in their town and get their licence, and now they've got to drive 30 miles.

**Mr Bradley:** Family support office.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** The family support office is another excellent example of a change the government has made that has not been for the better. The people of Ontario are not better served.

I hear this time and time again, and yet what do we have here this evening before us? Bill 25, where the government will further push to engage people on a short-term contract basis. There's not the same commitment. It's not like before, when people were employed by the Ministry of Transportation. They were proud to be employees of the crown and of the work they did. They were proud within their communities: "If you have a need and we can help you, we will do that." But on a contract basis you don't get that same commitment. With a contract they might be working in this community for a period of time and then they might shift to another community, wherever the need might be. When they leave one area to go to another, who's looking after the area they left?

**Mr Bradley:** That happened when they inspected water plants.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** My colleague from St Catharines reminds me as well about people who were employed in—I'm really glad the member from St Catharines is here because he's reminding me of a lot of things I hear about in my constituency, and I'm sure you hear about them on the other side of the House.

All I'm asking you this evening, as part of this debate, is to please pay attention to what the people are saying. They're saying, "We are not better served. When we consider where we were in 1995"—what they say to me is, if they had a choice between the little bit of money they may have here from the tax cut you've given them or being sure that when they need to go out on a winter night, they will know the road is plowed. If they have to take their sick child to the hospital, they know the road is plowed. That is not the case right now in Ontario. There is a myriad of services we took for granted for many years that are no longer there.

I say to the members of the government, please, consider what the impact of what we are debating here this evening will mean. It will mean a further erosion of services within our communities, and I don't believe that's what the people of Ontario want.

You would suggest that it allows us to be very selective and we can just place people here for a short term, but the needs of the people are constant. I think it's very short-sighted to suggest that we just throw money at a problem here and throw money here and put someone there for three years and after three years we'll put them over here. It's not good planning. It's not sustainable.

I'm very happy that I've had this opportunity to talk about an issue that's very important not only to myself but to the people I represent, people who come and talk to me every day. I just want to take this time as well to pay some tribute to the people who have dedicated their lives in their communities as public servants, who have been very proud of what they've done and who feel very badly that ministries they were formerly attached to are really only a shell of what they once were.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I would like to start at the point where my colleague left off, and that is that we don't pay tribute to our civil servants often enough. Many of these people at the higher levels, or at the entry level, are extremely hard-working and dedicated individuals who serve in our offices here at Queen's Park through the various ministry offices and the many offices that we have in our own communities. I know it's always easy to criticize them, as we all do from time to time as we sometimes hear from the general public, but most of the individuals who work for us in one capacity or another are extremely hard-working and dedicated to the public whom they serve. I think that should be stated, and it isn't stated often enough.

To listen to the government's propaganda you would think—and I think I'm using their exact wording—it's to modernize employment and recruitment practices and to give the civil service and the deputy ministers and the other people involved greater flexibility. It always astounds me about this government how they set about doing one thing but then they don't own up to it, they don't admit that they're doing it. Why don't you just admit the truth? You want as great a flexibility as possible. You want to be able to hire and fire people on relatively short notice, if and when you need them.

As far as I'm concerned this is taking us back—what?—40, 50, 60, 70 years, when people were basically hired on the basis of day labour or for a week or for a month or for two months. That's what's being suggested here. The suggestion was made by a government member that some of these people would prefer to work under contract for a year or two years or three years. I'll grant you there may be the odd one who would prefer that, but if you gave a person the choice between working for a ministry, particularly a ministry that they would be involved with in revamping its procedures, in the way it does business with the general public etc, if you gave the average person who has the qualifications to work within that ministry the choice between working for that ministry for a year or becoming a permanent employee, I know darned well that most of them would choose to be a permanent employee.

The argument goes, "What if some of these people want to get on to something else later on in their life?" and certainly in today's modern work world many people have more than one career, and it may very well be that some people, after working for a particular minister or in a particular job for two, three, five years, may want to go on to something different. But that should be their choice. That shouldn't be left up to some bureaucrat or some deputy minister.

We have some statistics here that indicate that right now 24.7% of the people who work for us in the various ministries are contract employees. That is one out of every four individuals. I don't know what it was like 10, 15, 20 years ago, but I'm sure the statistics were nowhere close to that.

I think that if we want to build up morale within the civil service, then the way to do that is by giving people a sense of stability, by also giving the individuals who deal with that particular ministry and with those individuals, in other words the citizens of the province who deal with that particular ministry or department, some sense of continuity. We want to make sure that the morale of the people who work for us is as high as possible.

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So don't give me all these code words, that you want "greater flexibility" and to "modernize employment and recruitment practices." It's got nothing to do with that. It's got everything to do with the fact that you want the right to basically hire and fire people on a moment's notice without their having any sense of security that they would get through the normal collective bargaining procedures through the various unions or federations that they may work under. That's what this is all about.

There are some particular aspects of this bill that really disturb me, and one of them is section 34. One of the government members mentioned that. It deals with the whole aspect of disclosure of private information. I would invite the government members to do two things: (1) read that section very carefully, and (2) get an opinion from the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Ann Cavoukian.

I know there will be plenty of opportunity between now and 9:30 for a government member to get up on a two-minute response, and perhaps during that period of time they could indicate to me whether or not this section—section 34, that deals with personal information about public servants and who it can be shared with etc—has in effect been referred to the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Or are we going to find out three or six months from now, as we have so often in the past in so many other pieces of legislation that we've dealt with in this House over the last three to four years, that as far as the Information and Privacy Commissioner is concerned, this is totally against the law or does not meet the standards that are required under the information and privacy legislation?

I'll just read this section very quickly. It says, "Personal information about a public servant may be disclosed, collected and used under this section only to

the extent necessary for the proper administration of an integrated human resources program." I don't know what an integrated human resources program is or who decides what it is in particular circumstances, but I'd certainly like to have some answers on that. It says, "A public servant shall disclose personal information about a public servant to a person engaged in providing an integrated human resources program." In other words, a public servant may have to give this information not to another public servant but to a person engaged in providing an integrated human resources program who may or may not be a public servant.

We all know how this government got into deep trouble with POSO, the Province of Ontario Savings Office, when information went to the private sector there, and it was the private sector in that case that basically said, "Hey, you gave us information about 50,000 individuals, and we don't want it." It was a major scandal here a year or so ago. So we all know what can happen when the privacy rules and regulations and laws of this province are not followed and how information can be misused if it ends up in the wrong hands.

I would like somebody on the government side to give a clear-cut explanation of section 34 as to why it is necessary to take this information and give it to people who are not public servants. What is the reason for that, and has this section been vetted through the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Ann Cavoukian?

We know what this government is all about. This government is about providing as few public services as possible. We've seen the results of that. We've seen what happened within the Ministry of the Environment and in Walkerton when, in effect, the environment budget was cut by some 50% and basically an awful lot of the inspectors—I forgot the exact number—were let go. The jury is still out as to who exactly is to blame for that. Obviously the public inquiry is getting to the bottom of that right now. But we know the dangers to our own public safety that can be involved in not having the qualified people who are so badly needed within the workforce of a particular ministry.

This bill is just about more of that, about basically giving the government and, through the government, its deputy ministers as free a hand as possible to hire and fire whatever employees are needed from time to time. That, as far as I'm concerned, does not lead to the kind of morale that you want within the public service, the kind of public service that we've always admired in the province of Ontario. That is seriously at risk if this legislation gets passed.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Christopherson:** I wish to comment on the remarks of the member from Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington and the member from Kingston and the Islands, specifically comments made by the member from Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. She talked about the new classification of temporary contract

employees and the concerns that she has about that. I'd just like to underscore that message.

In fairness, I can recall when we were in government that the number of unclassified versus classified was a problem, and we had a number of plans in place that were at least heading in the right direction. I won't stand here and say it would have solved the problem overnight, but at least it was taking us in the right direction. What this government is doing with Bill 25 is taking us in exactly the wrong direction. The problem was, not enough people were full-time, not enough people had the benefits and the job security they were entitled to. A lot of individuals who were unclassified had been connected with the Ontario government as an employer for years, longer than some people spend what they would consider to be a whole career chapter in a job. They were locked into this unclassified twilight zone: you've been there five or six years, you've got some rights but not in law, and at the end of the day you're working beside somebody who has all kinds of rights. That was a problem that needed to be addressed.

Your solution is to create another classification, term classified. So we're now going to pile on top of all those people who were on the one-year contracts people on three-year contracts, and as I mentioned in earlier remarks, you still haven't done anything about giving people on contract some rights. You've been so busy taking away everyone else's, you haven't focused where you should be.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** I'd like to draw your attention to the remarks by the member from Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington as well as the member from Kingston and the Islands. The member from Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington suggested that this would curtail services. I'd like to know how this could possibly curtail services when we have said specifically it was to enhance the delivery of public services.

What we are trying to do here is hire external expertise on a job-specific, project-based, term-limited appointment, and that is specific to exceptional circumstances. It is not for all of the public service; it is not for a broad area of the public service. It is exceptional circumstances only. A good example of this would be in the IT area where we are trying to develop an IT program. We want to be able to hire the best possible expertise. We would like to be able to go to a corporation like—let's use examples—Research in Motion or Descartes, or whatever, to bring in that expertise that we do not possess in the public service so that it would free up our public service to do what they do best. This will not be expanding the size of the civil service; it will be job-specific only.

The member from Kingston and the Islands said he would like to know what the Information and Privacy Commissioner said. He may find this hard to believe because he wasn't in on the briefing, but certainly his critic was: we did consult with the Information and Privacy Commissioner and nothing in section 34 allows us to divulge—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

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**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** I was watching the debate on TV and the member from Kitchener Centre referred to some of my remarks last night where we talk about the disclosure of personal information. As the member from Kingston said, under the explanatory notes it says, "Section 34 would permit personal information about public servants to be disclosed, collected and used but only to the extent necessary for the proper management of an integrated human resources program." We go to section 34 and it talks about—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Crozier:** Well, yes. But what it does say throughout the bill is that a deputy minister may take his authority and delegate it to any other deputy minister; any other deputy minister may delegate his or her authority to any person or persons. Now, that throws the door wide open. Any person—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Crozier:** It doesn't say that; it says "any person or persons." I want the government to explain to me, then, where in this legislation there's a definition about "person or persons." To me, that can be the private sector. If that's not the case, then let's amend the bill so that it says it cannot be used by the private sector, because any time you talk about delegating authority, delegating responsibility, to "a person or persons," to me that simply means you can delegate it to the private sector and then just like the provincial savings office, it can be right out there in the private domain. I don't want anybody's private information being out there.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre):** I think the fundamental objective here that we've been trying to achieve is that it gives the public service the flexibility that many industries in the private sector have. It allows you that opportunity, as a deputy minister or a delegate thereof, to bring employees in. There are other categories that currently allow them to do that. This simply gives them another classification to be able to bring in, as we've said, some experts, perhaps some employees on a particular trial basis, and it's an opportunity, because if they prove themselves, like in other sectors, it's a perfect opportunity for them to be fully employed.

This is a flexibility that many in the private sector have. Why shouldn't the public service have the opportunity to really be able to comb through and try people out if we want the highest-quality public servants? It gives management the opportunity to ensure that if someone works well and proves they have the skill sets to deliver, we have a highly qualified, well-skilled person who can complement the rest of the workforce.

I just wanted to draw attention—it appears as if no one has been drawing comments to sections 7 and 12 of the bill, which really have come about as a result of the request of the workers. These are the civilian workers who work with the OPP. We just want to make it known, because it seems to have been ignored by the opposition, that this is a very important element of the bill that allows these civilians to be able to work with the OPPA.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** Just in response to the comments made by the government members, you obviously didn't meet before and get your stories straight. I mean, what is the purpose? What is your goal in bringing this legislation to the House for debate tonight?

The member for Kitchener Centre would say, "There are projects in the civil service that are short-term in nature, and we would like to be able to, in the area of information technology, for example, go out and hire the best of the best." Personally, I believe that as a government we will have a need for experts in information technology for more than a short-term period of time. But that's what the member from Kitchener Centre said.

Then the member for Brampton Centre got up and said, "The reason we're establishing a three-year-term is so we can try these people out; we can find out if we like them or if they like us or there's some chemistry here." It's a very different message and I think a very dangerous practice to get into, that, "We'll try people out. Instead of leading them along for maybe a year, we're going to do it for three years now," and somehow that's going to be good for the people they're serving. I really question the kind and the quality of service you're going to get from someone you have a contract with who's constantly wondering, "Am I in their favour or am I not?" You don't get the best commitment or the best job when people are put in those kinds of work environments.

The two speakers for the government really tell the story here. They're presenting it as one rationale, but really I think the member from Brampton Centre uncovered the truth.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** I certainly appreciate the opportunity to take a few minutes to talk about Bill 25.

On April 30, 2001, Minister Tsubouchi introduced amendments to the Public Service Act. It's interesting to note that it has been more than 40 years since the act's last substantial update. The legislation dates back more than 122 years and parts of it no longer meet current and future business challenges.

As the main legislative framework for human resource management in the Ontario Public Service, the act sets out the authority for activities in areas such as recruitment, conditions of employment and rules of conduct. It governs the employment of all civil servants, unclassified public servants and crown employees designated under this act.

We are taking action to substantially update the act and make sure that this legislation supports what taxpayers expect from their government: greater accountability and better services.

The legislative changes we're looking at will help the public sector deliver the top-notch services the people of Ontario demand. The changes will provide more efficiency and flexibility and ensure that we have a workforce that can respond to changing business needs.

I want to go back to this question of efficiency, because obviously efficiency, effectiveness and reliability are the cornerstones of excellent public service. The proposed amendments to the Public Service Act and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act focus on how to help the Ontario public sector deliver services the taxpayers of this province expect and deserve. Real people and families all across the province are facing pressures on their finances. They look for ways to get more for less, and if they can spend less and get more, they do it. Government should be no different. In fact, it must be exactly the same, because government does not have its own money to spend. It only spends the money of taxpayers, and we must always strive to be more efficient and deliver valuable services which give taxpayers the greatest value for the dollar.

One challenge to creating greater efficiency is attracting and retaining people in the public sector who can deliver high-quality programs. These people often need to have specialized expertise, expertise which may be in short supply and in high demand. If we are to deliver on taxpayer expectations, we need to be able to attract and retain top talent that can ensure things happen.

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The current Public Service Act makes it difficult for the public service to attract this talent, especially at executive levels and in high-tech areas. If you look at the changes that have come about in the last five years within many of the ministries, it demonstrates how important this particular talent is to the ability of government to embark on greater e-commerce and e-government in being able to have the expertise there. These legislative changes would allow us to make more attractive job offers to new workers with the specialized skills that are necessary.

Updates to the act include increasing initial appointments to the unclassified service up to a maximum of three years before they need to renew. Again, I go back to some of those ministries which have been working for some time on special initiatives which do require the specialized services of individuals. It is in those areas that we need to be able to have this flexibility.

This bill creates a category of term classified employees. This will help the ministries recruit workers with the highly specialized skills for time-limited projects. This adds an element of flexibility and adaptability which is needed to do business in today's fast-paced work world. It allows the government to take greatest advantage of specialized talent which is needed for specific projects, but not necessarily on a permanent basis. These employees may have an opportunity to renew their contract after three years, where appropriate. They will be entitled to many of benefits currently available only to full-time, classified employees.

This will make the Ontario Public Service more attractive to today's highly specialized and mobile workforce, who are looking for new challenges and stimulating opportunities. Nothing in the bill overrides any existing provisions in any collective agreements, nor

does it propose to change any of the classified positions in the public service.

But I must emphasize that we cannot meet the needs of the people of Ontario if we are not flexible enough to adapt to their changing needs. Again, you don't have to look far before you can find many examples of the way in which our government does business and the way in which we have changed the way in which government does business. We can only do this if we modernize our employment and recruitment practices.

We cannot be democratic if we do not give people a choice. We have an obligation, therefore, to recruit and retain the best employees possible to deliver our programs and, at the same time, we need to have a flexible workforce to support time-limited initiatives.

The new provisions in this bill will help us do that. They include increasing initial appointments to the unclassified service up to a maximum of three years before renewal is complete. Current provisions limit initial appointments to the unclassified service up to one year.

New provisions also include creating a category of term classified employees. Ministries will be able to hire these employees in exceptional circumstances where highly specialized skills are needed for time-limited project work. All of this will allow the ministries to recruit individuals with the required skills and make offers for temporary positions more attractive. Hiring employees for specific terms is an example of how we can remain committed to meeting the needs of taxpayers. By removing unnecessary layers of bureaucracy, we can focus on delivering our services to the public.

Part of the legislative updates to make the Ontario public service more efficient includes providing greater flexibility to civil servants' reporting relationships while remaining accountable to the taxpayers, who foot the bills. This includes situations in which deputy ministers will be allowed, subject to the approval of the Civil Service Commission, to delegate their authority under the Public Service Act to non-public servants. Currently, a deputy minister may only delegate his or her authority to a public servant in his or her ministry. This limitation was identified as a barrier to cross-ministry initiatives and partnerships with other governments and the private sector.

I think this is a point that needs to be emphasized, because one of the criticisms of the traditional delivery of services by ministries was the fact that there was the problem, the barrier, of dealing with only one ministry whose focus, then, was that particular ministry. It really lends credibility to the notion that the left hand needed to talk to the right hand. It is this kind of legislative initiative that will further allow that kind of inter-ministerial initiative to continue and in fact to be able to provide better service.

If you think about the many small communities in this province where being able to access ministry services is extremely important, sometimes it's a real barrier for those individuals in those small communities to be able to access those services in a timely, convenient and

efficient manner. So it's the opportunity this legislation affords that allows us to be looking at that kind of delegation.

But let me be clear. Allowing greater delegation of a deputy minister's authority does not mean we are reneging on our commitment to be accountable. In fact, one of the most important issues is, of course, the need to be accountable. This piece of legislation is only part of a broader series of measures that the government has taken, and will continue to take, to bring accountability to the taxpayer dollars that are spent on public programs every day.

Changes in the Public Service Act will make government programs more accountable to the people of Ontario by giving it the flexibility required to reduce the waste and inefficiency involved with administering government programs. It will allow for more flexible and dynamic working arrangements to address the needs of taxpayers which are not adequately addressed through single ministries, as I mentioned. By delegating this authority of some deputy ministerial authority, it will help the civil service streamline its operations, while keeping all parties involved accountable to the government and the people of Ontario.

It is important to note that there is a difference between delegation of authority and delegation of responsibility. All people who are affected by this will still be accountable to the deputy minister, the government and the people of Ontario. This act would, if passed, allow deputy ministers to delegate authority, providing for more flexibility in reporting lines. For example, the Deputy Minister of Health and Long-Term Care would be able to delegate supervision authority of some employees to a manager in the Ministry of Colleges, Training and Universities, which is working collaboratively on a project to increase the number of medical school graduates. Under the current legislation, this would not be possible. Deputy ministers can delegate authority to managers within their own ministry, but not externally.

With challenges that require solutions involving more than one ministry, the current act makes it necessary to have several reporting lines where only one is necessary. I think that if you look at the example I gave a moment ago with the opportunities it provides for people particularly in smaller communities, I'm sure you will understand how effective this kind of change can be.

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What we have now creates an unnecessary level of bureaucracy, which is obviously responsible for unneeded expenses without any value. This is not good value for the money, and with scarce resources, we know that it is necessary to do more with less, just as families have been doing for years.

This is being accountable to the precious resources we deal with. After all, government does not have any money of its own; it all belongs to the taxpayers.

The value added in this portion of the legislation provides for a more efficient and effective public service that

is more responsive to the needs of the community. It will allow the government and public service to approach challenges in the innovative and creative fashion that people want. Taxpayers don't care about bureaucratic hurdles; they want results and value for their money. We are going to provide just that.

These changes are only part of a wider approach by this government to bring more accountability to the taxpayers' dollars being spent on public programs every day. It is being accountable by delivering programs that adapt to the changing needs of Ontarians and taking innovative approaches to the challenges and pressures of delivering top-notch services in the light of increasing fiscal pressures.

As you know, our government has been exploring and continues to explore partnerships with the broader public service or the private sector to provide better service to the people of Ontario. With the creation of SuperBuild, Ontario signalled its intention to increase its use of private-public partnerships and to provide the best value for Ontario's taxpayers.

But the government can only review its services and assets and allow for public-private partnerships if it has the ability to delegate authority. At the same time, we need to establish open, fair and transparent processes to ensure that the public's interest is protected. That's exactly what changes in the Public Service Act allow us to do.

These changes also include providing workplace democracy for Ontario Provincial Police civilian employees. By amending the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act and the Public Service Act, civilian employees of the Ontario Provincial Police will be able to choose, on a one-time-only basis, whether to continue to be represented by their current bargaining agent or by the Ontario Provincial Police Association.

Under the current Public Service Act, 2,500 people are prevented from their democratic right to choose the bargaining unit which they feel best represents their interests. Civilian employees of the Ontario Provincial Police, who perform duties such as administration, forensic sciences and other important roles in police business, are barred currently from joining the Ontario Provincial Police Association. This situation is out of sync with municipal police forces in the province, whose civilian employees are represented by the local police association.

We believe that democratic choice is imperative. Many, many letters have been received from civilian employees who want the choice to decide on the bargaining unit that represents them. As it stands, the legislation does not allow for these employees to be part of the Ontario Provincial Police Association.

This amendment will allow these employees to have the democratic choice of which bargaining unit represents them. This choice rests with the employees. This is not a government decision. Each member is free to vote according to his conscience. Should they feel that their current union does not properly represent their interests, they may choose to join another.

The process will be fair, transparent and democratic. Each union will vote separately. Members of one union will not have a say about the fate of another.

Just as in the Labour Relations Act, certification will only take place when more than 50% of votes cast are in favour of joining the Ontario Provincial Police Association.

From this you can see how important Bill 25 is in ensuring the fairness and the opportunities in this province.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** People who are watching this debate may wonder what is the focus of, what's this, our second evening of debate on what may seem to be a somewhat minor bill. The fact is that the government has already brought in all of its major legislation opening the door to privatization in virtually every area of what has formerly been public service, either delivered by government or indeed by the broader public sector.

I am surprised that they have left any housekeeping details that are yet needed in order to carry out any further privatization. In fact when it comes to government's directly provided services, I'm surprised that there's much left that they need to do, that there's much more that they could possibly privatize.

We've watched the systematic dismantling of the Ontario public service under this government. You would think that the government would be prepared to step back and understand, have accountability for, the consequences of the kind of privatization which has already been done.

Because time is limited, let me take the Ministry of the Environment water testing labs as one very salient example. I could go back to about five years ago, now, when those labs were being privatized and we raised questions about what would be the water safety, what would be the standard of protection of the public when these labs were privatized and it was carried out by a private sector company. There were no answers then. We actually raised the cost-effectiveness, because we had evidence that we presented in this House that showed that the water testing laboratories under the public sector were actually offering a less expensive service than those labs operated by the private sector. It didn't matter. This government's goal was to privatize. It didn't care about the consequences.

I would suggest that, in any of its privatization, it has no interest in accountability. It talks about accountability for the public sector, but when it comes to private sector contracting out, we get the kind of answer that the Minister of Health has given on the cancer care private clinic, where he says, "It's a private sector arrangement. I can't be held accountable for it." There is no business plan. We can't even get it under freedom of information. No accountability; just more privatization for ideology.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I want to say to the member from York North, please don't share that speech with the others, because I've memorized it already. If you do that, I'm going to say, "Oh, my God."

By rote it's right here. I don't know how many times I've heard the word "flexibility"—12, 15, 20 times.

**Mrs Munro:** But have you learned it?

**Mr Marchese:** No. I learned how to remember your speech. It's "more with less," right? Right on number one. "We'll help to streamline," "ability to recruit the best," "flexible workforce," "removing layers of bureaucracy." The word "choice"—I don't know how many times I heard that one. It's a beautiful speech. It has no content. I'm not saying it's your fault, member from York North, because there are a lot of staff people who help with these things in terms of sending out the messages. It's messaging; I understand.

What you people are doing is hoping that the poor working guy out there will say, "Yeah, right on. There's just too many of these civil servants, and they have such a cushy job that whatever we can do to get rid of these people is good." So we create the term "term classified"—I'll get to that when I have some time.

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But this speech and the speeches of most of the other members demonstrate the abhorrence this government has for the union movement, for union members, for unions generally, and the mistrust and distrust of the general workforce that works for you people. I just don't understand it. How can you expect to have the kind of morale we expect of our workers when you're telling them, "We're just about to get rid of you" through this new "term classified"? "Government has no money of its own," she says, but they collect it and give it out to the private sector and privatize more and more.

**Mr Tilson:** I'd like to comment on one of the areas that was raised by the member from York North, and this is something that has been going on in private enterprise for years. This is not new stuff. In fact, we're trying to bring the civil service into an area that private enterprise has been doing for years. There are many jobs today in corporations and in industries and, indeed, in government, which require a specialized service. Information technology is one example which requires someone to work for short periods of time. Current provisions limit initial appointments of up to one year for these unclassified services. That's all it is.

What we're trying to do is encourage good, qualified people to come into the civil service for longer than that period of time. We believe that increasing this initial term of employment will make the public service a more attractive workplace to external workers and help us retain the skills necessary to deliver the services the public needs and deserves.

That's one of the purposes that was raised by the member from York North as to what we're trying to do with this piece of legislation: to encourage good, qualified people to come into the civil service for these specialized areas.

**Mr Crozier:** There are a number of things this bill does that are of concern to me. One in particular is that it de-professionalizes civil servants. Last night I gave some

history of the civil service and why we have the civil service. The member from York Centre—

**Mr Marchese:** York North.

**Mr Crozier:** I'm sorry, York North—described, or at least said, what the bill does. But what hasn't been forthcoming from the government is why they're doing it. We can see—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Crozier:** Well, the mere fact that nothing has been done for 40 years or 140 years still doesn't mean that a reason shouldn't be given for doing it. The whole reason the public service was established was to professionalize and de-politicize it. I pointed out last night how outside workers, those out in the field, used to have jobs at the whim of their political masters. The public service has performed a very professional role over these 100 years or more. What we haven't heard yet from the government is why they want to de-professionalize the civil service, why they seem to want to take it back and politicize it. I think one of the things that is hidden in this bill is the fact that much more political influence may come to bear when it comes to offering work and jobs in the public service. That's our concern.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mrs Munro:** Thank you to the members from Thunder Bay-Atikokan, Trinity-Spadina, Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey and Essex. I want to concentrate my comments in the brief time I have. First of all, to the member from Trinity-Spadina, who obviously has listened very carefully and has certainly picked up on the important parts of this bill—I'm not sure he understands them—and also in response to the members from Essex as well as Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey, I would just point out that the whole purpose of this bill is, in fact, to be able to deliver services. It requires some expertise. That expertise is in our community at large. We, in this government, have made a commitment to move to streamlining services for the people of Ontario. Doing that requires the infusion of the kind of expertise that will come in and make those contributions, potentially on a short-term basis.

It also is really important to recognize that in the last few years you see the ways by which we have streamlined services, making those things available to people, whether it's kiosks, e-mail or the Internet. That requires the kind of expertise this legislation will allow for. And yes, that is flexibility.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bradley:** It's always interesting to look at the content of these pieces of legislation to see what hostage is in them, what message is found in the legislation. What it's all about is this obsession the right wing has on the other side of the House—not the old Davis Tories, who were kind of practical in their approach, but the right-wing ideologues who now dominate not only the Conservative benches but of course the inner echelons of the Premier's office and the minister's office.

This obsession with privatization permeates so much of the legislation and the regulatory regime of this gov-

ernment. You can see where there is payback. One need only look at the television shots of the Tory fundraiser, the big one in Toronto—perhaps one of the government members can help me with how much money you cleared in one evening.

**Mr Wettslaufer:** Two million dollars.

**Mr Bradley:** Two million dollars, the member for Kitchener says. This means that the captains of the corporate world have shown up at the Tory fundraiser to thank the Tories for turning over to them this wonderful opportunity to make money at the taxpayers' expense.

In the past, many of these services were provided by the public service at a reasonable cost, with efficiency. But this government, because it's obsessed with wanting to get rid of government, says in effect, "Well, we had better hive this off, and where better to hive it off than to our friends in the corporate sector?"

So they line up at the fundraiser to say thank you. I think—and somebody on the government side will help me out—they must have at least \$16 million in the pot now, in the campaign chest.

**Mr Wettslaufer:** Two million.

**Mr Bradley:** No, \$2 million was one night. You made \$2 million in one night. I have read \$16 million, and that was the last figure. That was before the member for Niagara Falls hosted the major fundraiser in St Catharines, which no doubt brought in hundreds of thousands of dollars because of his hard work in gathering the people, and also the hard work of Cam Leach, who was recently appointed to the police commission in Niagara. He was the chair of the dinner. I know that was a pure coincidence; it was not a reward. I don't want anybody on the other side suggesting that was a reward for chairing the fundraiser.

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** That was a punishment.

**Mr Bradley:** A punishment, says the member for Niagara Falls.

The point I want to make that is troubling to me, when I look at the democratic process—and this isn't the only jurisdiction where it has happened—is that, more and more, money plays a role in the political process. Where we saw that was before the last election—

*Interjection.*

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**Mr Bradley:** I know the member for Perth would certainly be concerned about this: more and more, our politics in Ontario is being dominated by the ability to spend a lot of money. Remember, before the last campaign—the Minister of Health was in the cabinet then, I think, or he may have just been a whiz kid—they decided they would raise the limit on the amount of money a corporation or an individual could contribute to a political party. That of course helped the party that was catering to the richest and most powerful people in the province, that being the Conservative Party.

Second, they raised the limit on how much a party or a candidate could spend in an election campaign. Again that benefits those who have the financial wherewithal—

**Mr Wetlaufer:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: As we seem to be debating fundraisers instead of Bill 25, I wonder if it would be in order to point out that the Liberals raised \$1 million on their latest fundraiser.

**The Deputy Speaker:** That isn't a point of order, but I would remind the member for St Catharines that we are debating Bill 25.

**Mr Bradley:** I don't see the microphone on. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, I can say it now. I won't say that whoever operates the microphone was asleep at the switch, because I know he never is; he's always doing his job appropriately.

If that is the news, it must be good news. The point I make is that you have raised the amount that people and corporations can contribute and you've raised the amount that can be spent on an election campaign. The reason it ties in—I'm glad the member for Kitchener brought Bill 25 to my attention. It's all about privatization, and who benefits most from privatization? Those who are lining up at the government trough for profit-making purposes on public services. They are the friends of the Tories, the corporate captains, the people who have greased the skids for the Conservative Party when it comes election time. The member for Grey-Wellington—is that the new one?

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** Dufferin-Peel.

**Mr Bradley:** It always changes. The member for Dufferin-Peel would be concerned about this because he's a parliamentarian.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Through the Speaker, please.

**Mr Bradley:** Through the Speaker, he has been a parliamentarian who I think has observed the process with some interest. I think in his heart of hearts, if he were allowed to speak out, he would agree with me that it is unhealthy to have money play such an important role in the political process. It should be secondary. I think that's unhealthy in any jurisdiction. We see the consequences south of the border, where privatization is moving ahead very quickly.

I know that some of the members of the cabinet who are of the right wing—and I see a member sitting across from me, the Minister of Health. I'm not sure whether he walked out of the Alliance caucus today or not, because I was watching television a bit about people walking out.

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I was never in.

**Mr Bradley:** He says he was never in.

You're wondering, Mr Speaker, what this has to do with Bill 25. Let me look at a few areas where I see some privatization taking place that I think is unhealthy.

Make no mistake about it: Premier Harris is bound and determined that he's going to privatize our health care system. Privatization will eventually involve two-tier health care; that is, one tier for the rich, who are able to buy their way to the front of the line, and one for the rest of the province. I'm looking at an example where I see privatized for-profit health care take over where there was a public service. We have Cancer Care Ontario, which over the years has done a credible job, a good job in terms of dealing with cancer care in the province. At

Sunnybrook hospital, Dr McGowan, I believe it was, who was with Cancer Care Ontario, left it to set up a private firm that will now provide that service that the public sector, the hospital, should be providing at Sunnybrook. That's for-profit. There isn't anybody in this province who can tell me that Sunnybrook hospital, given that additional funding and that additional staff, couldn't do the job and do it at less cost, because there's not that for-profit motive there.

We'd like to get a copy of that particular privatization contract. The Minister of Health says it's a secret. We have been trying to get it. I asked the health critic for the Liberal Party. We've been trying to get the information on it. We can't get the kind of information we need, just as we can't get information on privatization in the field of electricity. There's a contract up at Bruce nuclear and we're trying to get that contract. It's, "Oh, you can't have that." What's the word they use for the information?

**Mr Marchese:** Classified.

**Mr Bradley:** Classified. No, there's another word the corporate sector uses that you people could tell me.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Privileged.

**Mr Bradley:** Privileged information or something of that nature. It's a big secret. You cannot tell us what the terms of that contract are, yet the people of Ontario will have to accept the consequences of that contract. Again it's the secrecy, it's the behind-the-closed-door nature of this government, while their friends in the private sector are benefiting.

We had an example given of the privatization of the Ministry of the Environment labs. We have one former minister here today. In fact there is a long line of people who are former Ministers of the Environment in this government. But there is one this evening at least who is here. We're not allowed to say who is absent. I can say who is present, however. There is one who is here. Nothing epitomizes the problems that arise more than with this obsession with, shall we say, privatization. They closed the regional laboratories of the Ministry of the Environment. I believe today that, had the Ministry of the Environment labs received the samples from Walkerton, they would have sent out the red flag immediately.

Remember what the private sector lab said. The person representing that lab said, "My responsibility is to my client." That was the local water commission and the person who looked after the plant. "That's my responsibility." But I can tell you that the Ministry of the Environment, when it was running that laboratory, would have informed the local medical officer of health and all concerned that there was a problem with the water in Walkerton at the very time the people from that public lab, the Ministry of the Environment lab, would have received it. Unfortunately that lab was closed down. The municipalities were virtually left on their own in that instance. They had a turnover time that was extremely short. It was totally disorganized, and across the province we were left vulnerable.

I'm a person who wants to give credit to the commission, which we asked for and forced the government into

a public inquiry on this matter in Walkerton. I'm fair enough to say, let me hear the final results from that. I'm not a person who would rush to judgment on all aspects of it. I simply say that with the privatization of those labs there's a problem.

I was listening to Godfrey Jenkins, who is a highly courageous and very knowledgeable person in the Ministry of the Environment, talking about privatization and the implications in this bill. He was testifying very recently before the commission. Here's the question to him:

"Let me deal ... with the layoff situation. I take it, Mr Jenkins, you're aware of the substantial layoffs in the ministry over the past five or six years or redeployment and those sorts of things?

**Mr ... Jenkins:** Yes.

"Q: And would you agree with me that the layoffs resulted in a substantial loss of expertise to the Ministry of Environment on drinking water issues specifically?

**Mr ... Jenkins:** Absolutely.

"Q: And would you also agree with me that the layoffs resulted in a substantial loss of what we might call institutional memory?

**Mr ... Jenkins:** Very much so."

I think that's important to look at, because one of my colleagues mentioned earlier what happens when you lose that institutional memory. That's what happens when you bring people on only on contract.

I want to look at a Hansard. This was postponed, by the way, when the Premier decided the House wasn't coming back until April 19. You will remember the House sat, I think, December 20, and then most of the public actually thought the House was back in January because they saw the federal House in session.

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** I was working in January.

**Mr Bradley:** The member for Perth was working.

But we have a House that is supposed to be in session, was not in session. The Premier did not allow it to come into session.

One problem we had was that the Provincial Auditor's report on the Ministry of the Environment couldn't proceed before a committee because the very day before, the government said, "Guess what? We're going to prorogue," and it's all wiped out. The only committee that could continue is the government agencies committee which processes the appointments—the Conservative appointments of the Conservative government—through the committee.

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** Who's the Chair?

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**Mr Bradley:** Now, I have to be impartial. Somebody once said, "Well, you can't criticize what the committee does if you're the Chair." So I will step aside from the chairmanship for a second and I will tell you—and this is an MPP's observation—there is an inordinate number of people who, when asked the question, "Are you now or

have you ever been a member of the Progressive Conservative Party?" answer, "Yes." They answer yes to that.

**Mr Bartolucci:** I remember when Ray Poratto couldn't—

**Mr Bradley:** I don't want to get into that. But here's what happened before the public accounts committee. Ms Richardson of the Ministry of the Environment—and the former minister will like to hear this; he will know about this, maybe—was asked about new staff, because we expect that.

**Mr Spina:** Bill 25.

**Mr Bradley:** Well, this is Bill 25. This is contract staff. For once I'm on target. This has something to do with the bill. I know you think a lot of the things I say don't have; this has. The question is asked of Ms Richardson. She says, "I actually have a chart with some of that information that Mr Griffith" of the ministry "doesn't have. In our efforts this year to get increased resources and staffing, we did obtain approval for 68 new staff in what we're calling Operation Clean Water."

So I'm about to say, "Hurray!" I want to compliment the government; I'm trying to get the microphone so I can compliment the government. Well, unfortunately, Ms Richardson goes on to say the following: "Fifty-four of those staff were for inspection and enforcement activities, six for certificates of approval, three for certification and licensing, and five for project management coordination." The question is asked, "So are they permanent now?" I'm leaning over my chair to hear whether they're permanent or not, and Ms Richardson says, "No, these are not permanent staff. We have about 18 months' worth of funding for this project."

So as soon as the heat's off, these people are going to be fired out the door. The member for Niagara Falls was there. He will confirm this when he gets a chance to speak later on. He will confirm what I heard. And it's just another example. You want contract staff.

What happens? There's no institutional memory there. What you wanted to—and I have now two former Ministers of the Environment who are here today. I'm seeing double. As I say, I could probably see seven if they were all here, but at least two former Ministers of the Environment are here. I almost forgot what I was going to say.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** And myself. That's three, yes.

What was I going to say on this one? This was—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** Exactly. It was extremely important. It was about temporary staff.

I remember when we were going to have the blitz. Remember when we found out there were a lot of problems with the water treatment plants in the province because the government decided it wasn't going to inspect them on the schedule that it used to? Well, then they had to have a blitz, because they had to show something was going on. So they took people from other parts of the ministry and left those parts vulnerable. What else did they do? Well, remember the people they fired

out the door, over 900 people? Some people have said as many as 1,400; I erred on the conservative side. At least 900 people were out the door of the Ministry of the Environment.

Well, they hired some of them back. They had to go scrambling around the province and around the country to find these people to hire them back to inspect the water plants on contract. These are similar to the forest fire-fighters, what you've had to do there. So there's an example in the Ministry of the Environment of how this bill will apply.

Well, what else do we have? You wonder about the pay of these people. Will the pay be the same as the people in the Premier's office and in the offices of the ministers? They all got a 30% increase. I saw in the newspaper where it said up to a 30% increase in ministers' staff and the Premier's staff." Not even the cabinet ministers themselves got a raise, but their staff all got a raise. That must tell you people something about where the Premier places you in priority compared to his personal staff and the political staff of the ministers. I thought you should know that because some people in the province may not be aware of that yet.

We have POSO, the Province of Ontario Savings Office. I'm now getting telephone calls and letters from people who lament the closing of this office. It provided a nice service for people. You know what the banks are doing now: they're consolidating, gobbling up the trust companies, closing offices left and right around the province, shrinking the hours, and here's the Province of Ontario Savings Office of which Bill Davis was proud, I think Premier Robarts was proud of it and subsequent governments. Now the ideologues say we've got to shut that down, a good service for the people of Ontario.

We also have the privatization of health care that we see incrementally happening. More and more services now must be obtained from private sources because the government is underfunding those sources.

So the whole plan of the right wing—and I'm not talking about the moderate Conservatives who used to occupy those benches; I'm talking about the new right-wing ideologues—is to discredit public services and public institutions, "Create a crisis," as John Snobelen, the former Minister of Education said, so that people will accept in desperation a solution they would never accept, and that is privatization.

The Premier is setting us up for privatization of the health care system, we see privatization creeping into the education system as we see American universities coming in here and it all has to do with the contents of this particular Bill 25.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Marchese:** I've got to say from the outset that I support 90% of what the member for St Catharines said. It's the other 10% I want to talk about.

You've got to stop talking about those special-interest groups and those fundraisers, OK? You guys have the same problem. My history of how I remember this is that Tories have fundraisers of \$700 a pop and you guys have

fundraisers of \$600 a pop. More or less you're there, \$100 less. When you surpass \$500, it's a whole lot of money, right?

I want to make reference to another event that Monte Kwinter—they're honouring Monte, and God bless, I think that's a good honour, but it's for the Ontario Liberal fund.

**Mr Bradley:** I used to go to your fundraisers.

**Mr Marchese:** I understand that. But with our fundraisers we're lucky if we can raise \$25 a pop, right? With all due modesty, I want to say it.

At the event of Monte the special guests were Peterson and McKenna and His Worship Mel Lastman. There are about 60 people on this tribute committee. I think a whole lot of people on this list swing both ways, if you know what I mean; not a whole lot, but a lot of these special types swing both ways. Jim, I hope I'm not hurting you too much with this but I always get a bit sensitive about these areas.

When we talk about special interests, please be careful. But on the whole matter of what this government is doing in terms of undermining the public service, I'm with you. On the whole matter of wilfully weakening the public sector, I am with you. It's an attack on the unions; it's an attack on the civil servants. With that, you and I are on the same side.

**Mr Wettkaufer:** Speaker, if you ever doubt that you're losing your sense of humour, and I say the same to the television audience, then just tune in to this channel, because we heard it all tonight: the wildest accusations from members like the member for St Catharines, who only spoke, out of his total 20-minute time allotment for Bill 25, for one and half minutes on Bill 25.

**Mr Tilson:** That's a record.

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**Mr Wettkaufer:** That is a record. But what they've done is taken a very boring piece of legislation, something that is non-controversial, and tried to spice it up with these wild accusations.

The member for St Catharines even decided to talk about 30% pay increases for members of staff. I just wonder what his reaction is going to be next month when the federal Liberals in Ottawa slide through that 30% to 40% increase for MPs that they're talking about. I wonder how he's going to react. I realize that I'm also not talking on Bill 25, but I know I'm expected to address my comments to what he was talking about.

I understand part of the problem of why they are not addressing Bill 25, because I spoke to the member from Kingston and the Islands outside of the House a little bit earlier and he explained to me that he would appreciate a briefing from the minister. I think we can arrange that. We did arrange a briefing for the member for Essex, the Liberal critic, but I think at his advanced age he is perhaps not remembering everything properly and he is not passing on that information to the members of his caucus. I'm convinced that's what it is. Understand, Mr Speaker, this is the first change in 40 years.

**Mr Crozier:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think his subversive attack on my age might be an attack on all older people in this province. He would do well to listen to age and respect it.

**Mr Bartolucci:** I agree with everything the member from St Catharines said. He outlined the shortcomings and the reasons that we must be concerned about Bill 25. It is not an innocuous bill. It has major ramifications for the people of Ontario. Let me tell the people of Ontario what the bill contains in just one small segment. It will allow a deputy minister to delegate his or her powers to hire, fire, promote, transfer or discipline to any deputy minister in any other ministry or to any designated private sector person.

What the member for St Catharines was saying is that this government's bent on privatization is not in the best interests of Ontarians. Imagine for a second that a deputy minister can delegate authority for jails, environmental protection or public safety issues to a private company whose only interest is profit.

For 20 minutes I heard the member for St Catharines outline scenarios, real-life situations, where this government has failed the people of Ontario because we didn't put the necessary safeguards in place. Listen to what the member for St Catharines is saying. Listen to what our critic the member of Essex said last night. This is a major piece of legislation that must be reworked, that must go to committee, that must have its major shortcomings addressed in committee, and hopefully the amendments that will come forward will make this bill acceptable to the people of Ontario. We cannot accept Bill 25 the way it is.

**Mrs Munro:** It gives me pleasure to be able to comment on the earlier remarks of the member from St Catharines. I think that people forget the fact that governments must move on in the same way as the community around us to be able to provide the kinds of efficient services that people have come to expect. This government has made those kinds of commitments.

Bill 25 acts in the same vein as those earlier commitments. There have been so many examples of changes we have introduced that allow members of our communities to interact with government and government services on a much timelier basis than had traditionally been done. Bill 25 simply continues that commitment by making sure that we are able to have the flexibility and at the same time maintain the accountability that will allow us to make sure that those services are conducted in a transparent manner, that will make sure the people in this province continue to have the best services available to them.

Much has been made of the opportunity to allow the deputy ministers to delegate authority. Very clearly, when you look at the way that interministerial activity goes on today, that is precisely what is necessary. Interministerial activity allows for the community at large to understand the big picture of government, that we are no longer locked in those silo mentalities.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response, the member for St Catharines.

**Mr Bradley:** I appreciate the remarks of all members.

The member for Trinity-Spadina: the only thing I would mention is, I had one of the Waffle group of the NDP say to me the other day—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** They're resurrected—"I was very concerned when the NDP changed its constitution to allow donations from companies." That person was disappointed.

**Mr Marchese:** I was against it.

**Mr Bradley:** I knew the member was against it.

The member from Kitchener talks about an impending federal raise. Well, again, they're following your lead. You said they followed your lead when they were cutting taxes for the corporations, and now they're following your lead because people in your cabinet were floating a 42% increase for members of the Legislature. We in the opposition said, "No way is that going to happen."

Obviously the federal government heard what you were saying and may wish to implement it, because their opposition won't fight it—a divided opposition. How many parties are there today in the House? I don't know if there is a new party with 12 people in it.

I could tell from his remarks that the member for Sudbury understands the danger of delegating the deputy minister's power to some hotshot in the private sector to start firing people or demoting people in the public service.

The Conservative member for York North said, "Governments must move on." I couldn't agree with her more. This government should in fact move on. I agree entirely with her on that.

I want to say, one of the nasty things that was done was there was a chance to allow people who had worked for the government all of their lives, with perhaps three years left, to bridge themselves to retirement, and your government denied them the opportunity. However, for MPPs, the bridge to retirement is an appointment.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 2128.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Beaches-East York	Larkin, Frances (ND)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
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Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	<b>Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony</b> (PC) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée		<b>Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Health and Long-Term Care) / ministre sans portefeuille (Santé et Soins de longue durée)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
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Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b> (PC) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)		<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.</b> (PC) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
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Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Tilson, David (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Wood, Bob (PC)
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)		Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
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Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	LaLonde, Jean-Marc (L)		
Guelph-Wellington	<b>Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda</b> (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Mississauga East / -Est	
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	
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Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
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Niagara Falls		St Paul's	Molinari, Tina R. (PC)
Nickel Belt		Stoney Creek	McLeod, Lyn (L)
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Northumberland		Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Ramsay, David (L)
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Oakville		Thornhill	Smitherman, George (L)
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Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
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Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	York North / -Nord	
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	York West / -Ouest	

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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Gerard Kennedy, Frank Mazzilli,  
Norm Miller, John R. O'Toole,  
Steve Peters, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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Doug Galt, Ernie Hardeman, Monte Kwinter,  
John O'Toole, Gerry Phillips, Joseph Spina  
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Garfield Dunlop, Steve Gilchrist, Dave Levac,  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Crozier  
James J. Bradley, Bruce Crozier,  
Leona Dombrowsky, Bert Johnson,  
Morley Kells, Tony Martin,  
Jerry J. Ouellette, Bob Wood  
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### **Justice and Social Policy / Justice et affaires sociales**

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Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos,  
Lyn McLeod, Tina R. Molinari  
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

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### **Regulations and private bills / Règlements et des projets de loi d'internet privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop  
Gilles Bisson, Garfield Dunlop,  
Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy, Frances Lankin,  
Frank Mazzilli, Ted McMeekin, Bill Murdoch  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

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Government  
Publications



No. 17A

N° 17A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario  
Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario  
Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 16 May 2001

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 16 mai 2001



Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 16 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 16 mai 2001

*The House met at 1330.*

*Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** The Minister of Health will be in Sudbury tomorrow to make an announcement. Would it be terribly wrong for us northerners to hope he will finally do the right thing? The northern health crisis has been ignored and trivialized by this government for far too long. Northern health inequities are not something to be used as political ploys, for which this government is now famous.

So today Dalton McGuinty, my fellow Liberal colleagues and I, on behalf of the working families in northern Ontario, call upon the minister to do the right thing tomorrow: release the George report, show us the recommendations; inject immediate funding into physician recruitment and retention strategies in order to address the crisis-proportion doctor shortage problem we have; increase the northern health travel grant to treat northerners as equals; increase the funding to cover the capital construction and equipment costs for the Sudbury Regional Hospital; and finally, show us the money, and show us the site of the northern medical school, with co-campuses in Sudbury and Thunder Bay, along with the assurance that the already beleaguered working families of northern Ontario will not be left footing the bill.

Northerners want to hope that the minister will finally do the right thing. With 40,000 people in Thunder Bay without a doctor, and over 40,000 people in Sudbury without a doctor, we know it is time the government implemented the George report recommendations that they should be injecting \$10 million this year to address that problem.

#### YOUTH AWARDS

**Mr Wayne Wetlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** In today's society, our youth are sometimes labelled as mischief-makers and rabble-rousers, just some kids looking to cause trouble. Well, they're a small minority of youth, and I can be as critical as anybody of that small minority. But that is a stereotype, and it's a stereotype that was challenged on the evening of Friday, May 11 in my riding of Kitchener Centre at city hall.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate six very honourable youths from my community, who were presented with awards that night for their contribution to society: Anthony Simon, youth of the year; Lillian Machado, outstanding involvement in organized and recreational athletics; Yvonne Jarsch, outstanding achievement in the performing and visual arts; Austin Howes, outstanding service to local charities, organizations and community-based groups; Dan Desrosiers, outstanding initiative in a business or project that resembles coordination of a business; Candace Perry, outstanding involvement in an organization for the purpose of running activities beneficial to others.

I am proud of these individuals and their achievements in the community. I congratulate them and wish them the best in their future endeavours. I anticipate that they will continue to do more and that other youths from the community will follow suit. Many of Ontario's youth do a lot for Ontario.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** I am very happy to welcome a group of very brave and courageous citizens who have come here from Victoria county. They have come here to this Legislature because their member refuses to listen to them and refuses to meet them.

They are from the wonderful towns, cities and villages of Lindsay, Bobcaygeon, Fenelon Falls, Omemee, Sturgeon Point, Woodville, and from Fenelon township and all those wonderful parts of central Ontario that this government has forced amalgamation upon against their will, a dictatorial act that took away the rights of these citizens in Victoria county. In fact this government even took away their name and had a consultant force a phony name on this beautiful, historic treasure in central Ontario.

These brave people have come here today because their member will not hear them and this government refuses to listen to them, but they will not forget. They will not give up the fight to keep their names and their heritage, which their forefathers fought for in two world wars. They will not let go of their democratic rights easily. They will fight for Victoria county and they will fight for their heritage because they are taxpayers, they are citizens, and no matter what their member says or Mike Harris says, their rights are inalienable and they will fight for them to the death. They will not forget. Victoria county forever.

## NORTHUMBERLAND APPLE ROUTE

1340

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I rise in the House today to make the announcement of the extension of the apple route in Northumberland. The apple route is provincially recognized by many and has now been in existence for some seven years. Currently the route runs from Lock One in Trenton to Wicklow Beach Road just east of Grafton. This year the route will extend through Cobourg and Port Hope to the Welcome exit at Highway 401.

It has been a magnificent attraction for Northumberland county, encouraging rural touring by combining agritourism with heritage and ecotourism. This event consists of a ribbon-cutting ceremony, a tour of the Welcome Produce Market and apple orchard, followed by refreshments and appetizers at the Welcome Inn. There will also be a display of local businesses as part of the business networking evening.

I welcome all to join me in the celebration and official ribbon-cutting ceremony that will be held on Thursday, May 24, at 4 pm at the Welcome Inn near the Welcome Produce Market, located just north of the Welcome exit, Highway 401.

#### ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** In 1998 this House unanimously supported a resolution by the member from Windsor-St Clair to establish 11 principles for an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. June, which is approaching, next month, will mark the sixth anniversary since the Premier committed to passing an ODA act. In that time the citizens of Ontario have continued to suffer.

There is an obligation, as we have been reminded through the media in the past several weeks, for an MPP to meet with each and every constituent and to advocate for each and every constituent. The Premier has on 27 occasions refused in writing to meet with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee. When they were just down the hallway here, the Premier refused to go down the hallway and meet with them. But now he is in Switzerland committing to provide accessible accommodation and accessible services for the participants in the Paralympics that will happen here in 2008, hopefully.

Excellent idea. Great idea. It's long overdue that we commit to that. But if the Premier can commit to support the removal of barriers for visitors to the Olympics in 2008, surely he can take and remove the barriers for the citizens of Ontario. He has an obligation as Premier, whether he believes in a group or not or whether he supports a group or not, to meet with each and every citizen. I demand that the Premier find five minutes of time while he's in town to meet with the ODA committee.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** I want to welcome the citizens of Victoria county who are here in the galleries with us today. When they came in they were wearing buttons that they had to take off—I had to take mine off too—that say, No Debate, De-amalgamate—a quick flash here. They're here today in a just cause, and I welcome them. I want them to know the NDP supports their cause.

They are citizens from Victoria county who had no direct say in the creation of the new city of Kawartha Lakes, and they have been trying to get through to their member, the member for Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, to no avail. As I understand it, he refuses to call them back, refuses to talk to them about this issue.

They say the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable local government they were told, nor the provision of better services at reduced cost. Does that sound familiar to us here in Toronto who are going through the same thing?

The tax decreases they had been promised have not been met, and the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this fourth amalgamation have already exceeded the promised amount by over three times. It is clear that this forced amalgamation has not worked, and furthermore the citizens overwhelmingly said they didn't want this amalgamation. My party, the NDP, stands with them today and says to the government, "Shame on you." We will be working with them de-amalgamate.

## TOWN OF ST MARYS

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** I rise today to recognize the efforts of the town of St Marys in my riding of Perth-Middlesex. The town of St Marys, home of the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame museum, recently announced that they are not raising municipal taxes for the ninth year in a row. Let me repeat: nine years in a row. This tax freeze is a tribute to St Marys council and municipal staff, who have shown leadership and determination through the municipal restructuring process. They've also been able to maintain a healthy reserve account in excess of \$2 million.

Rather than blame someone else, raise taxes or shirk responsibility, the town of St Marys accepted the challenge and are proud to have one of the most efficient and cost-effective municipal governments in the province. More importantly, the town of St Marys continues to offer and provide first-rate services and programs to its residents.

I want to take this opportunity to commend St Marys mayor, Jamie Hahn, for showing exemplary leadership and vision. I also want to applaud St Marys council and the municipal staff, especially the soon-to-be-retired clerk, Ken Storey, for their hard work and commitment on behalf of local ratepayers.

Please join me in recognizing the town of St Marys for leading by example and for holding the line on municipal taxes for nine years in a row.

#### PREMIER'S ATTENDANCE

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** The government of Ontario is pursuing global positioning technology to keep tabs on parolees, and the corrections minister is going to have a request for proposals. This may be a fine idea. We think we should expand that request for proposals to include some kind of homing device for the Premier of Ontario. That way, we would know all the time where the Premier of Ontario is. As a matter of fact, if we could get his attendance up over 38%, maybe we wouldn't need a homing device to figure out why he doesn't want to come to the House and, when he gets here, why he doesn't want to address any questions. He's famous for passing off from golfer to caddy, because he refuses to be accountable to the people of Ontario.

Imagine: anywhere he might be on the golf course, right before he takes that swing, we could beep him and tell him it's almost question period and he ought to make tracks back to the House and be accountable to the people of Ontario. We think we could even include some kind of zapper device, and as the time approaches 1:30 of the clock, we could zap him and say, "It's question period time, time to answer to the public of Ontario all the accountability questions the Ontario Liberal Party has for the Premier of Ontario." Let's get that global tracking device, because we may actually find the Premier of Ontario.

#### VOLUNTEERS

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** On April 27, I had the pleasure of attending a community volunteer summit, hosted by the Cambridge Volunteer Bureau, to launch Ontario's Promise in my riding of Cambridge.

Carol Arris and her team at the bureau did a great job. The summit brought together approximately 100 community and business representatives for breakfast at 7:30 am. Represented were the Waterloo Regional Police, the OPP, the United Way, Babcock and Wilcox, the Royal Bank, Clarica, Rier Industries and Patentia Inc, to name a few. Agencies of promise were identified and successful partnerships shared.

Pat Singleton of the Cambridge Self Help Food Bank and their corporate partner, McArthur Express, presented an example of their partnership that provides a delivery truck and storage for the food bank.

Keith Taylor from Big Brothers told of many companies and staff who supported them in their travelling barbecue fundraiser and others who participated in their bowl-a-thon.

This summit brought together members of local agencies with business to forge partnerships and celebrate success.

Through Ontario's Promise, we all have the opportunity to tap into resources and facilitate partnerships, all to the benefit of the young people of this province. I would urge every community in Ontario to become involved.

#### HÔPITAL MONTFORT

**Mme Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier):** Répondant à une question adressée au premier ministre, à savoir s'il allait se désister de la cause Montfort afin de permettre aux francophones de cette province de conserver le seul hôpital universitaire francophone de l'Ontario, le procureur général a dit qu'il ne pouvait commenter puisque la cause était devant les tribunaux.

Par contre, le premier ministre Harris, à sa sortie de la Chambre, a eu le culot de commenter la cause Montfort devant les journalistes. C'est un manque de respect flagrant envers cette Chambre. Le premier ministre s'abstient de répondre aux parlementaires mais se permet de répondre des énormités aux médias.

Il y a plus : le premier ministre n'a pas le courage ni la décence de le dire dans cette Chambre, mais le message qu'il transmet aux médias est que d'accepter le fait français en Ontario semble être dangereux pour la stabilité du Canada. Il faut alors détruire la cause Montfort et la reconnaissance de la francophonie, sinon les provinces ne pourront plus gouverner. Le gouvernement Harris tente d'intimider la cour et le peuple ontarien en brandissant le spectre du péril francophone.

Maintenant la vérité est sortie. Nous voyons les vraies couleurs de Mike Harris. Les francophones et franco-philques de cette province et du pays entier ont toujours soupçonné que Mike Harris penchait dans cette direction. Maintenant ses propres paroles hors de cette Chambre sont très claires. Son gouvernement s'aligne sur le côté des extrémistes antifrancophones dans ce débat. Quelle insulte aux Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes et à tous les Canadiens et Canadiennes.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Yesterday in my statement to the Legislature I referred to the allocation of this government's investment for people with developmental disabilities. I'd like to take just a brief moment to correct the record and clarify my previous remarks.

This government has committed \$55 million this year, growing to nearly \$200 million by 2006-07, to enhance services for people with developmental disabilities and to attract more quality caregivers. This money has not been directly allocated to any one organization.

Again, I would like to thank the Ontario Association for Community Living for their important contribution to community living in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I thank the member for correcting the record.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery the Honourable Greg Deighan, Minister of Tourism with the Prince Edward Island Legislature, who is joined by his wife. Would you please join me in welcoming our special guests.

## BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that today I have laid upon the table copies of the order in council appointing the Honourable Janet Lynne Ecker and the Honourable Chris Stockwell as commissioners of the Board of Internal Economy, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, among the members of the executive council, in place of the Honourable Norman W. Sterling and the Honourable Chris Hodgson; appointing James Stevenson Gilchrist, MPP, as a commissioner to the Board of Internal Economy, appointed by the caucus of the government, in place of Doug Galt, MPP; and appointing Gilles Bisson, MPP, as a commissioner to the Board of Internal Economy, appointed by the caucus of the New Democratic Party in place of David Christopherson, MPP.

1350

**REPORT,  
OFFICE OF THE INTEGRITY  
COMMISSIONER**

I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the report of the Acting Integrity Commissioner, the Honourable Gregory T. Evans, responding to the request by the member for Timiskaming concerning the Honourable Michael D. Harris, Premier of Ontario, and the Rail Cycle North waste proposal.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS**

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

**Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman):** Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr7, An Act to revive Premium Auto Collision Inc.

Bill Pr9, An Act respecting the Town of Newmarket.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a fourth report of the standing committee on government agencies.

Pursuant to standing order 106(e), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**IMPROVED SAFETY ON 400 SERIES  
HIGHWAYS ACT, 2001**

**LOI DE 2001 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ACCRUE  
DES ROUTES DE LA SÉRIE 400**

Mr Mazzilli moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 50, An Act to improve safety on 400 series highways / Projet de loi 50, Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des routes de la série 400.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement.

**Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe):** This bill amends the Highway Traffic Act. A person driving a class A motor vehicle in a direction on a controlled access highway where there is more than one lane must not do so in the extreme left lane unless the lane is obstructed or closed. Regulations under the act can provide for those exemptions.

**PORTABLE HEART  
DEFIBRILLATOR ACT, 2001**

**LOI DE 2001 SUR LES DÉFIBRILLATEURS  
CARDIAQUES PORTATIFS**

Mr Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 51, An Act to help save the lives of Ontarians who suffer from cardiac arrest by promoting the widespread availability and use of portable heart defibrillators in public places / Projet de loi 51, Loi visant à contribuer à sauver la vie des Ontariens qui souffrent d'un arrêt cardiaque en promouvant la disponibilité et l'usage généralisés de défibrillateurs cardiaques portatifs dans les lieux publics.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement.

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** It's my honour to be here, and in the gallery to have Garrie Wright from Toronto emergency services, who is doing a great job spearheading this defibrillator program across the province.

This bill would require that portable heart defibrillators be made available and installed in significant public buildings, including privately owned buildings such as shopping centres, arenas and stadiums that have

significant public access. The widespread installations would be completed within three years after the bill is enacted. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in consultation with emergency health stakeholders is required to develop and issue training and education guidelines for the use of portable defibrillators within six months after the bill is enacted.

The bill provides for protection from civil liability for users of defibrillators and owners of premises on which the defibrillators are installed.

This portable device, the cost of a laptop computer, will save thousands of lives and save millions of dollars in health care costs. I hope this bill becomes a reality in the near future.

#### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Mr O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 52, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act / Projet de loi 52, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** The bill amends the Legislative Assembly Act to provide that a member of the assembly shall not receive any salary as a member for a period during which the member is suspended from the service of the Legislative Assembly.

I must recognize before the Legislature that this bill was first introduced in 1996 by the current Minister of Finance, the Honourable James Flaherty.

I introduce this bill in an attempt to promote the highest level of decorum and civility and respect in this Legislature. Several incidents, such as those now, specifically involve the leader of the official opposition, the member from Sault Ste Marie and the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane and are cause for concern with regard to declining respect and civility in the Legislature.

The VIP visitors, the visiting schoolchildren and the pages who come to Queen's Park are not impressed by the lack of civility and decorum demonstrated in this Legislature.

Last week the Minister of Citizenship proudly hosted several veterans of the Second World War on the 56th anniversary of VE Day, including George Lacey, Frank Russell, Harold Penn and many others.

The bill is consistent with the government's 21st step into the 21st century: support for parliamentary reform.

In summation, we all recall the famous statement, "I may disagree with what you say but I will defend your right to say it."

#### PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEE'S SEVERANCE PAY DISCLOSURE ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR LA DIVULGATION DES INDEMNITÉS DE CESSATION D'EMPLOI DES EMPLOYÉS DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

Mrs Bountrogianni moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 53, An Act requiring the disclosure of payments to former public sector employees arising from the termination of their employment / Projet de loi 53, Loi exigeant la divulgation des versements effectués aux anciens employés du secteur public par suite de la cessation de leur emploi.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):** This bill requires that if a former public sector employee who is not subject to a collective agreement receives \$100,000 or more as severance pay, the former employer shall make available for public inspection a written record of the amount of the severance paid to the former public sector employee.

On June 21, 2000, I introduced a bill called the Public Sector Employees' Severance Pay Act. It passed unanimously in October 2000, but it died on the order paper.

Over the past years, taxpayers in Hamilton and Ontario have been outraged by the number and the secrecy of the severance payments which have been paid. Today I am introducing a bill which requires that all public sector severance payments over \$100,000 will be made public. No more secrecy. This is about accountability. This is about transparency. This is about our right as taxpayers to know how much we are paying to terminate employment.

#### RETAIL SALES TAX AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA TAXE DE VENTE AU DÉTAIL

Mr Parsons moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 54, An Act to amend the Retail Sales Tax Act to provide an exemption for fire education equipment / Projet de loi 54, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la taxe de vente au détail pour prévoir une exemption à l'égard du matériel d'enseignement des mesures anti-incendie.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** In much of Ontario, fire protection is provided by volunteers. In far too many cases they have to fundraise to

purchase their equipment, and the province permits them to have the sales tax returned to them.

In addition to the commitment to fighting fires, they are committed to preventing fires. Unfortunately the province taxes any equipment which volunteers purchase with money raised from the community. This bill would provide an exemption for fire education equipment specifically designed at the time of purchase for educational purposes.

The media on a regular basis carry stories of children who have saved lives within their own households because of skills taught to them via the fire education vehicle. I believe it is imperative that we not cause volunteers to spend additional time taking money from their communities to go to Toronto that would be better used for fire protection in their own areas.

I would like to acknowledge with thanks Bob Pearce and the fire safety committee of Hastings and Prince Edward for bringing this to my attention. I apologize that the rules don't allow this bill to be made retroactive. However, I challenge the Minister of Finance to make it retroactive by regulation and return to my community the \$4,000 that was taken out of it by this government in retail sales tax on fire safety equipment.

## MOTIONS

### HOUSE Sittings

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Wednesday, May 16, 2001, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1402 to 1407.*

**The Speaker:** Would all the members kindly take their seats.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Agostino, Dominic  
Baird, John R.  
Barrett, Toby  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bourtnianni, Marie  
Boyer, Claudette  
Bradley, James J.  
Brown, Michael A.  
Bryant, Michael  
Caplan, David  
Chudleigh, Ted

Elliott, Brenda  
Galt, Doug  
Gerretsen, John  
Gilchrist, Steve  
Gill, Raminder  
Hastings, John  
Hodgson, Chris  
Hoy, Pat  
Hudak, Tim  
Jackson, Cameron  
Johns, Helen

O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Parsons, Emie  
Peters, Steve  
Phillips, Gerry  
Pupatello, Sandra  
Ramsay, David  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sampson, Rob  
Smitherman, George

Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Snobelen, John
Cleary, John C.	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Kennedy, Gerard	Sterling, Norman W.
Colle, Mike	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Conway, Sean G.	Kwinter, Monte	Stockwell, Chris
Cordiano, Joseph	Marland, Margaret	Tsubouchi, David H.
Crozier, Bruce	Martinuk, Gerry	Tumblin, David
Cunningham, Dianne	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Di Cocco, Caroline	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	Molinari, Tina R.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duncan, Dwight	Munro, Julia	Wood, Bob
Dunlop, Garfield	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David
Ecker, Janet	Newman, Dan	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Nays

Bisson, Gilles  
Churley, Marilyn  
Hampton, Howard

Kormos, Peter  
Larkin, Frances

Marchese, Rosario  
Martin, Tony

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 71; the nays are 7.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We have a group from Victoria county who have travelled long and far to come to this Legislature, and they would like to meet with their member, the member for Haliburton-Victoria-Brock.

**The Speaker:** Get to your point of order quickly, please.

**Mr Colle:** It would mean having a meeting set up with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the constituents after question period today.

**Interjection:** You could ask for unanimous consent.

**The Speaker:** You can't ask for unanimous consent. Members can do that on their own.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### EDUCATION REFORM

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Over the past six years, this government has built a solid record of investment and innovation in Ontario's publicly funded education system. In developing the key elements of our reform agenda, of our plan, we have listened to what parents and taxpayers told us needed to be done.

To improve quality and accountability, we established a more rigorous curriculum with higher standards and brought in standardized testing to measure students' progress.

To provide the assurance that all teachers have the up-to-date knowledge and skills they need to help students reach their full potential, we are implementing a comprehensive teacher testing program. The first phase of the program began last fall with the introduction of the

language proficiency test, through the Ontario College of Teachers, for teachers who took their training outside of Ontario in a language other than English or French.

This fall, standards for mandatory professional development with recertification every five years, performance appraisal, evaluation, and decertification will be phased in as well. This will ensure that all of our teachers are evaluated, consistently and regularly, with input from parents. Next spring, we will begin a new qualifying test for all new teacher graduates, as well as for all teachers trained outside the province.

This government believes that the involvement of parents in education is critical to achieving higher standards and raising student performance. For parents to be able to make the necessary decisions and choices about their children's education, they need information and they need effective avenues for participation. Parents also want to see evidence that student achievement is improving.

To strengthen and support parental involvement, we created understandable report cards, and we have been working to strengthen the role of parents in their children's education through school councils.

I recently released new regulations that increase the accountability of the education system to parents and strengthen the voice of parents in the public education system. Effective this fall, school councils will have the right to make recommendations to their principal or school board on any matter. Principals and boards will be required to seek the views of school councils in a number of very important program and policy areas, and to report back on actions taken in response to school council recommendations.

In addition, to provide parents with the stronger voice they have been seeking at the provincial level, we recently expanded the Ontario Parent Council to include six regional representatives chosen by school councils across the province.

Parents want to see steady improvement in their schools, and to help make sure this happens, this past January we announced the creation of the Task Force on Effective Schools. The task force will make recommendations on ways to improve board management practices, planning systems, school improvement plans and teacher excellence. We are all looking forward to the completion of their report later this spring.

We have made improvements in our important special-education services as well. Last year we increased spending by 12% over the previous year, and that's the third year in a row that resources in this important area have been increased.

In addition, as part of our ongoing plan to improve quality and accountability in special education, we created new standards for individual education plans for exceptional students. To ensure boards are accountable for delivering high-quality programs and services throughout Ontario, we've provided standards for school boards' special education plans so that parents will know

what to expect and what programs should be in place for their children. We're now working on the development of special education program standards for each exceptionality. I should also point out that these standards and the programs have been improved immensely because of the consultation and input of parents themselves.

As well, in the recent budget we announced an additional \$3 million this year, and \$4 million annually in future years, to expand the education supports for those children and youth who are confined in institutions and other facilities.

We have also continued to increase our investment in public education overall. For the 2001-02 school year alone, we have increased funding by more than \$360 million. This new money is also being provided in a way that will allow boards greater flexibility in determining how to meet their own local priorities.

Education funding for the coming school year is projected to be 2.8% higher than funding for this year. That means that education funding in this province will have increased from \$12.9 billion to \$13.8 billion since this government took office in 1995, an increase of almost \$1 billion.

On May 7 I announced a package of initiatives, a significant package to enable school boards to continue to make improvements for the coming school year. Subject to the approval of the Legislature where required, this package will include flexibility for school boards to vary the average class size in high schools by up to one student so there will be improved access to teachers and resources to help students; flexibility for boards to provide greater access to remedial help by expanding what is included in the definition of instructional time; and broadening the definition of instructional time to give school boards greater flexibility in recognizing co-instructional activities when assigning teachers' workloads. Part of that announcement was an additional \$50 million that schools and school boards could use to address such important local priorities as these.

Furthermore, and as part of the 21 steps into the 21st century outlined in last month's throne speech, we are taking several additional measures to support increased accountability and choice in education. These measures include the expansion of standardized student testing to all grades; the elimination of the institutional bias against home schooling; requiring schools to provide extra support for students who are falling behind; requiring boards to set targets for improving student achievement and to establish plans to help low-performing schools and school boards; the launch this fall of an annual survey to measure parents' satisfaction with their schools; and the proposal for legislation to allow parents to enrol their children in any available school within their system.

These are the actions of a government that wants to strengthen public education. They represent our ongoing commitment to ensure that Ontario's public education system can achieve excellence.

We have accomplished much in the reform of Ontario's public education system, but we also recognize

that more needs to be done. I remain committed to finish what we started, to complete our plan for better quality, more accountability, improved student achievement, and to simply do what we said we would do.

But just as we are supporting and encouraging parental involvement and choice within the public system, the government also respects the choice made by those parents who choose to educate their children in an independent school. Last week's budget announced another important step in supporting parental choice. The equity-in-education tax credit, which begins in the 2002 taxation year, subject to approval by the Legislature, will give parents a tax credit of up to \$3,500, phased in over five years, for fees they have paid to send their children to independent schools in Ontario. The government will work to identify the appropriate framework for establishing eligibility for this credit.

Every student in Ontario deserves the best education possible. I will continue to deliver on this government's commitment to develop a quality public education system, to improve student achievement and to prepare all of our students for success in a highly competitive global economy.

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**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Before we proceed with today's proceedings, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to take a 10-minute recess so that the member from Haliburton, Chris Hodgson, can meet with his constituents who came down here today—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** We've been through this. Member, take your seat. We've been through this. Anyone can meet at any time.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: With respect to standing order 35(d), "After any policy statement the minister shall table a compendium of background information," we have not yet been provided with that background information.

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Education, maybe for some clarification?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** There is a compendium. It should have been tabled. I'd be quite happy to send the copy of what I have here to the honourable member.

**The Speaker:** Statements by ministries? Responses?

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** It is a pleasure to finally see the Minister of Education—formerly the minister of public education, now the minister of private education—stand up in this House and put herself forward in some form or fashion in respect of her measure to create private school option preferences in this province. Instead we had less, on the clock, than 20 seconds' worth of justification from this minister, who is patently unable to disguise what none of the caucus across can hide from either: that this is a lazy, ideological, sloppy initiative that has nothing to do with enhancing the well-being of the students of this province.

The parents watching this today are alert to this. They are alert to the fact that we have a minister of private education who wants, at the expense of the needs of the

existing system, to promote the needs of people we'll find are not even the ones they put forward as being in need.

This is nothing less than an attack on public education. This is the culmination of five and now almost six years of deliberate efforts to destabilize the education system. We know from the last election that there are people out there who would like to give this government the benefit of the doubt. Instead, this verifies for everyone that what the government wants to do is create a back door to the public education system, having squeezed it every single way possible.

So these members opposite, these members on the other side, may agree that it's all right to take away \$918 from every single student in the province, because that's what they're doing, and in each of their ridings they know that less than 8% of that money has come out of administration savings. You stood in your place six years ago and said you could get away with taking money and resources out of the system. You stand here today and say, not only will you not live up to your responsibilities to give us a high-quality, excellent public education, not only do you shirk from that, but instead you're diverting those resources into the hands of people who don't need them, by and large.

We've had a new curriculum brought up that has been mismanaged by this government. We have had the most vulnerable students in this province, those vulnerable students in need of special education, who instead have been subject to a cut. The Provincial Auditor has acknowledged and the committee on special education has acknowledged that this government has actually taken money away from special education to fund its tax cut over the last few years. In fact, we have members opposite, the majority of whom I'm sad to report are headed to their constituencies next week—

**The Speaker:** Will the member take his seat. The Minister of Labour and the Minister of Transportation, we're not allowed to use props. Quit waving them around. Sorry, the member for Parkdale-High Park.

**Mr Kennedy:** This minister and her predecessors have spent six years taking choices away from parents and children in the public system, reducing and defining, giving them higher class sizes, because that's what has happened. They have made the school experience less meaningful by creating problems not only in special education but in each and every of the classrooms. We now have in this province a full-blown teacher shortage courtesy of the actions of this government, directly motivated by the attacks they've done, the public dollars they've misspent on advertising campaigns, and this minister still won't tell us how many thousands of teachers she has letters of permission for who aren't qualified to teach in the classroom because in Ontario teachers don't want to teach.

This minister of private education does not have the fulsome grace to divulge to us today who is really benefiting here. In fact, over the days and weeks to come we will learn that this is primarily a benefit, almost ex-

clusively a benefit, for people who attend private, elite schools, that in fact there is no improvement for those people who may be objectors of conscience and in religious schools. It is a narrow, defined benefit to encourage people.

Each of these members will go back to their constituencies next week. I challenge them to go to a public school and explain how you've set up a system that for every child you get to leave a public school, your government now saves \$3,300. This is the opposite of public education, and Ontario will be able to tell the difference.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I have a copy of a newspaper. In response to the minister, I just want to read a part of it, because it quotes the Liberal education critic, who says, "Private schools do have to be funded." After all that, I guess the Liberal position is that they agree with public funding for private schools, but they wish they'd done it first.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock. Order. The Minister of Labour, come to order, as well as the member for Windsor West. We've had our fun. It was a little noisy. I know it's good-natured and there was some laughing, but unfortunately I can't hear the leader of the third party's statement. I would appreciate some quiet. We've had our fun.

The leader of the third party. Sorry for the interruption.

**Mr Hampton:** I want to be very clear with the government that New Democrats oppose your scheme to extend public funding to private schools not just some of the time, not just in here and then we tell a different story out there. We oppose it in principle, unlike Liberals, who want to have it both ways. But I want you to know why we oppose it, because with all of your grandiose statement today, you ignored the reality.

Minister, in Canada today, in North America today, Ontario ranks 55th—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Sorry for the interruption. The members for Windsor-St Clair and Toronto Centre-Rosedale, come to order, please. I cannot hear him when you're shouting at him. We're not going to continue like that.

Again, sorry for the interruption, to the leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** I've just been handed another excerpt from a newspaper. This one is from Mr McGuinty, who says, "I have said in the past that there is a fairness issue here, and that's something we must recognize in stressing that the issue of private school funding is a 'how and when' matter."

I want to be very clear again: the problem with this government's scheme is that you have a terribly underfunded public school system. You have a public school system that the Ontario alternative budget calculates would require an addition \$1,000 per student in order to bring funding up to the necessary level. Instead, what is your strategy? Your strategy is to give parents a \$3,500-

per-student voucher to take their kids to a private school. You are not interested in funding our public schools to the level they need; you're interested in giving parents a voucher to take their kids to a private school. You're doing exactly the opposite of what needs to be done, and that's why we're so opposed to this in principle.

Over 138 public schools in this province are either closed or are closing as a result of this government's budget cuts. We know that only 85% of elementary schools have full-time principals—the leader in the school, and only 85% of the schools now have a principal. We know that class sizes are growing. We know that in grade 2, where it's important to have small classes, the class size has increased by 10% under your government.

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We know there are 24% fewer elementary schools with ESL programs as a result of your budget cuts. We know there are now 34,000 students in this province who need access to special education, but the money isn't in the funding formula to give them access to special education. I gather your answer is to give their parents a \$3,500 voucher so they can take their kids out of public school and send them to a private school.

The hypocrisy of this is worse every day. When you go out there—

**The Speaker:** You'll have to withdraw that word. You can't use "hypocrisy." I'm afraid you'll have to withdraw it.

**Mr Hampton:** Well, Speaker, the doublespeak about this is worse every day.

**The Speaker:** It's wrong and I want it withdrawn right now. You're not going to carry on like that. I've asked you to withdraw it, now withdraw.

**Mr Hampton:** I withdraw, Speaker.

George Orwell would be proud of this government. George Orwell would be proud of the way you stand here every day and say the public school system is being funded adequately, but every day the evidence grows. Children can't get special education. Children can't get access to ESL. Children don't have busing to get to school. Children don't have extracurricular activities. Children are in schools where they know the teacher they had last year is not going to be there, because the teacher has already told them, "I'm leaving. I've had enough. I don't want to be in a system where the government of the day doesn't respect public education and is not willing to fund public education."

That's the reality that's out there, and no amount of George Orwell's use of the English language, no amount of using words in the opposite way that they were intended to be used is going to cover up what's going on. But we're going to be consistent in our criticism. We're not going to say in here one day that we are opposed to your scheme to fund private schools with public money and then say out there the next day that it's OK. It's wrong. And it's wrong because it's robbing children of the education they need.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My questions are for the Minister of Education. You will recall that yesterday I produced a one-page form, the single and only requirement for private school operators. The only thing you ask of them is to complete that one-page form, and then they become eligible for part of your \$500 million in private school vouchers.

After question period, you told working families through reporters that they need not worry about pulling kids out of public schools because the ministry was inspecting private schools. Of the 734 private schools operating in the province, I would like to ask, how many have you inspected during the course of the past year? Of 734 private schools, how many did you inspect?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Obviously, his scribe was not taking good notes in my scrum yesterday. What we do is inspect those schools that wish to offer the Ontario diploma, to say that students in their schools are meeting the curriculum standards. That is what we inspect, and that has always been the case.

What I'd like to say to the honourable member is that this government believes that parental choice, the views of parents, the voices of parents are very, very important, not only in the public education system but also in those—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Minister, take a seat.

The member for Hamilton West, come to order. You keep shouting. Please come to order.

Sorry for the interruption, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. We believe that parents have a voice and that parents understand the needs for their children and their families more and better than the government. But when the honourable member was asked, "What about parents? Aren't they the ones responsible?" the honourable member said no. That is not a mark of respect for the parents in his riding and the parents in the ridings of his members who choose—

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up.

**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, just a few moments ago, during the course of your statement you said, "For parents to be able to make the necessary decisions and choices about their children's education, they need information." I'm just wondering why you're not prepared to provide that particular information. If you won't, then I'll help you out with it right now.

Of the 734 private schools in Ontario, last year your ministry only inspected 90. That's close to a 10% inspection rate. On top of that, you have in your ministry a practice of not inspecting any private schools. When it comes to three-year-olds and four-year-olds in private

schools, those children are none of your concern, apparently.

I want to know, on behalf of Ontario's working families, why you are taking \$500 million out of the public system, which is starved for funding, a system of which you demand tremendous accountability, and instead you're giving it away as a private school voucher to elite private schools and you are conducting only 10% of inspections out of a total of 734 private schools?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, no one is handing out \$500 million in vouchers. Again, the honourable member keeps trying to repeat it to make it true. Secondly, the honourable member believes that the parents in his riding, the parents in the ridings of his other caucus colleagues, are going to somehow put their children in situations that are not appropriate for them or not safe. If the parents of any school don't want their children there, they won't put their children there. If those independent schools, the ones in his riding, the ones in the ridings of his members, are so bad, then parents won't have their children in them.

We think parents both in the public system and outside the public system have a voice, and we are prepared to respect that voice; we are prepared to respect that parental choice. The honourable member is certainly quite prepared to say to those parents, "Maybe we will; maybe we won't. We're not sure how. We're not opposed to it but maybe we will"—

**The Speaker:** The minister's time is up.

**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, less than 15 minutes ago in that very seat you said, "For parents to be able to make the necessary decisions and choices about their children's education, they need information." Why are you so afraid to put out the facts when it comes to the accountability measures or lack thereof connected with your \$500-million private school voucher program?

All you need to do is complete a single-page form to start up a private school in Ontario. You're only conducting an inspection of 90 schools out of 734. Those are the facts. Why not make them readily available to Ontario parents?

Here's another fact, something I dug up in a Ministry of Education guideline. It says, "The ministry does not inspect health equipment, nor practices related to safety and staffing issues." Given that you're handing out a \$500-million incentive to parents to send their kids to private elite schools, don't you think you have some responsibility to make sure you inspect each and every one of those schools, that you make sure they are safe and that you make sure there are qualified teachers in those schools?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member is again showing the reasons as evidence for why we needed to change the curriculum in this province. His math simply is not adding up. No one is handing out \$500 million. What he likes to forget about is the over \$360 million we put into public education this year alone on top of the new money we put in last year. He likes to forget that. Here he goes again, showing no respect for the parents

who want to make that choice, no respect for the groups or organizations. The Jewish community, the Muslim community, the Montessori schools, all of those schools out there, he has no respect for them, what they do or the parents who make that choice.

**1440**

We believe that parents are to be respected. We believe that they have a voice in their children's education, in the public system, outside the public system, and that's why we are moving forward with the reforms to the public education system that we are doing.

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up, I'm afraid.

New question, leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** This question is for the Minister of Education. I want to talk to you about your continuing lack of commitment to public education in Ontario. You will know that the new curriculum requires new textbooks. This year, in September, it's going to be the grade 11 textbooks that have to be replaced. Two years ago we replaced the grade 9 textbooks at a cost of \$30 million. This year we replaced the grade 10 textbooks at a cost of \$30 million. But this year when it comes to replacing the grade 11 textbooks—it is the same students who will require the same number of new textbooks—you have cut the funding in half. You're only allotting \$15 million for new textbooks.

I'm just wondering now, again on behalf of Ontario's working families, why it is that you have \$500 million for private school vouchers but you've decided to cut the funding in half for our grade 11 students in our public schools when it comes to their textbooks.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** This is the honourable member across the way who said that school boards needed more flexibility, that there were too many rules around how school boards get their money.

We listened to what schools and school boards said. We gave them over \$360 million more this year. Do you know what we also said to them? They could make those decisions according to what the parents and the local community wanted.

Here we go again: if it's his party that's dictating how to do it, it's OK, but if the parents want to make the choice, he doesn't respect that. This government does respect those parents and their choices. He may not have respect for parents who want to make that choice, but his caucus colleague Michael Bryant does, his caucus colleague Monte Kwinter does, and obviously his caucus colleague Gerard Kennedy. They have more respect for parents in their ridings than you do in yours, sir.

**Mr McGuinty:** I want Ontario parents to learn something of your real priorities when it comes to education. You have \$500 million for a new private school voucher program, but you don't have enough money for textbooks for grade 11 students.

Let's take a look at some of your other priorities. This year school boards will be getting \$39.7 million less from you to heat our public schools. I'm sure you will have noticed that the cost of gas and the cost of electricity are

skyrocketing. Given that you have \$500 million for private school vouchers, why have you decided to cut \$40 million that is needed by our school boards in the public system to heat our schools for our children?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** With respect, the honourable member is clearly not paying attention. He is not paying attention to the new money that we gave them at the end of this year above and beyond the \$360 million, the \$43 million that we gave schools and school boards just for heating costs.

**Mr McGuinty:** These are the facts. You may find them difficult to grapple with, but they are the facts. You want to keep parents informed, then let's keep them informed. You have \$500 million for a private school voucher program, but you don't have enough money for textbooks and you don't have enough money for heating.

Here's another fact. I'm sure you have become aware that the price of gasoline is going up and it's going up dramatically. Despite this, you are cutting \$19 million from busing for our school boards in Ontario. It seems odd to me that you don't have money to drive the kids to public schools but you've got the money to drive them away from public schools.

Again, Madam Minister, on behalf of Ontario's working families and the parents, why is it that you have \$500 million for a private school voucher program but you don't have enough money for textbooks, you don't have enough money for heating and you don't have enough money for busing for kids in the public system?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** This government has \$13.8 billion—billion, not million; again, I know the honourable member obviously missed that math class—\$13.8 billion for the public education system, because the public education system is an important priority for the hard-working Ontario families this government represents.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Minister, take a seat.

This is the last warning for the member for Hamilton East. We can't continue. I'm going to start picking out people on both sides.

Sorry, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

He likes to say he's for standards in public education. Well, what about all the standards we brought in for the curriculum, the testing, the teacher testing, the safe schools—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Minister, take a seat.

The member for Kingston and the Islands, this is the last warning as well, and I don't believe he's in his seat. You can't yell, and it's your last warning.

Sorry again for the interruption, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Every one of those standards that he now trumpets, that he now says are so important, were standards this government told voters we would bring in, standards we are indeed putting in and standards the honourable member voted against every time. Now he says he's for standards.

This government believes in the public education system. That is why we have put more money in. That's why we have raised standards. We also respect parental choice, obviously something he does not.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Education. The opposition to your scheme to use public funds to fund private schools is growing across this province. Part of the reason it's growing is because people remember you saying six months ago, "We've been very clear that our goal is a good public education system. The \$300 million needed to fund religious schools would be \$300 million that would come out of the public school system." That's what you said.

Minister, since you've completely changed your story, and the Premier has completely changed his story, before you ram this legislation through, will you hold public hearings across the province so you can explain yourself to the people you flip-flopped on?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I do respect that at least we know where the honourable member and his party stand, unlike the Liberal Party, which has been on at least six sides of this issue in the last couple of weeks.

No one is taking \$300 million—at least he gets the figures right; again, the Liberals can't seem to tell the difference between the numbers. No one is taking \$300 million out of the public education system. As a matter of fact, we have put more money in. We are spending more on public education today than was being spent when this government came into office. Why? Because we believe the public education system is extremely important.

I believe that putting that money into the public education system is an investment in our future in this province, both economically and in the quality of life of this province. That's why the budget was also very clear that we are going to continue to make new investments in the public education system, because it is so important to those hard-working Ontario families this government represents.

**Mr Hampton:** The question was: since this government has totally flip-flopped, will they hold public hearings so the people of Ontario can hear from you what your reasons are? You have no mandate to do this. Six months ago you said this would never happen. In the last election campaign the Premier said this would never happen.

Minister, the last time there was an educational change of this magnitude in the province was in 1985, when the decision was made to extend public funds to public Catholic schools. The Conservative Party at the time demanded unlimited public hearings, and 80 days of public hearings were held.

If that was the test for the Conservative Party then, let it be the test for the Conservative party now. Will you hold public hearings across the province?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, this government does not support vouchers, and it is not implementing vouchers.

Secondly, the decision to fund Catholic education in this province, as I recall, because I was there also—and the NDP lined up right there with the Liberal Party, lined up right there with the Conservative government to support that decision.

**Mr Hampton:** It was a very simple question. It was a Conservative member in 1985 who demanded unlimited public hearings on the decision to extend public funding to public Catholic schools. Now, after your saying it would never happen that public funding would be extended to private schools, after the Premier's saying it would never happen when he was Premier, you've made that decision.

So the test for Conservatives in 1985 was public hearings, Minister—public hearings. We're having an educational summit here tomorrow tonight to talk about this issue. Come to that summit and explain to people that you will grant public hearings across the province, just as you demanded in 1985. Will you do that?

1450

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, this government and this Premier were very clear. He ruled out a voucher program. He didn't think that was appropriate for a parent in this province. What we have put in place and what we're proposing to put in place is a tax credit.

But I must also say that our commitment to the public education system by steps to make sure that we have more accountability, better quality, bringing in higher standards in the public education system, is my priority. It continues to be my priority. That's the business we're in, those are the commitments we made to parents, and we are indeed meeting those commitments.

I would challenge the honourable member that, rather than criticizing every one of the standards we brought into the public education system and voting against them and not saying they were important, perhaps he might want to support some of those standards for the public education system to make sure our students are getting the education they deserve in the public education system.

**The Speaker:** New question, the leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** I would say to the Minister of Education that public hearings were good enough then; they ought to be good enough now.

#### COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I have a question to the Minister of Energy. The situation in California with respect to hydroelectricity gets worse. Yesterday, the residential electricity rates were forced up by 34 cents a kilowatt hour. The residential electricity rates are now three times what they are in Ontario.

When you sold your dirty deal to sell off Ontario's hydroelectricity system two years ago, you said that California was an excellent example to follow. Minister, why are you risking California-style price increases here in Ontario?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** I've said time and time again that we are not California, nor are we Alberta. We have the opposite problem of California and Alberta. We have plenty of supply. We simply have that supply in a monopoly situation with unchecked costs, no choice for consumers, and frankly it's illegal to sell green power in this province, something that we're undoing as a government and making sure that people in this province have choice to buy clean power, to buy more environmentally friendly green power, all of the benefits of opening the market to competition.

The honourable member keeps misquoting, I suppose; I don't know. The fact of the matter is, I've been very clear. If he does his homework he'll find out from our independent market operator that the rules that are being written in Ontario are unique to Ontario to address our monopoly situation. They have nothing to do with California or Alberta.

**Mr Hampton:** This would be the only person I know in Ontario who would call the Premier's idea of 10 new nuclear plants "green power."

You keep saying there's lots of supply. California said there's lots of supply, but the reality in California was, the supply dissipated very quickly. Minister, the question is this: would you confirm that since 1999, on at least two occasions in this province, the demand for electricity has spiked up such that there was in fact a shortage of supply, and that on two occasions since 1999 they've had to reduce the voltage because of that problem of supply? Even your friend Tom Adams acknowledges that. Will you finally acknowledge that there's a problem with supply and that this is a lot more like California that you care to admit?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** With his green power comments the member is completely misinformed. I call taking the methane gas off of Waterloo's landfill site, the plant that we opened last year that now supplies power—green power, using methane gas, to 80,000 homes in the Cambridge and Waterloo area—I call that green power. I call green power the power that we're taking off the sewage treatment plant down on the lakeshore and burning that methane gas. Today, Toronto Works uses that electricity. That methane would have gone to hurt the atmosphere. Today it's being burned and it's used as green power.

There's a huge windmill project being built on the Bruce Peninsula, as we speak, by OPG and British Energy. I call that green power. I call the windmill on top of Blue Mountain, today providing power to the Collingwood grid, green power. You did nothing for green power in this province. It was illegal under your government. It was illegal under the Liberal government. We're breaking that monopoly and we're giving consumers choice.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** I have a question for the Minister of Education. I want to ask

you very bluntly about the contradictions you're serving up to the parents of this province. Less than a week ago, you introduced a private—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The member for Kitchener Centre, this is his last warning.

Sorry for the interruption.

**Mr Kennedy:** Minister, less than a week ago you introduced a private school voucher, and in it you committed \$300 million, which in actuality is easily 500 million scarce dollars. You used figures in this House that don't give a true illustration of how much money is missing from that system, and we'll deal with that outside this House. But I want to ask you very specifically: a week before that in this House you finally brought resolution to the extracurricular problem, or tried to, attempted to—we've been trying to get you to do that for months and months—and you said to the high school students of this province, "Your class sizes are going to get bigger, because we're not prepared to put money into quality education." The only way we're going to get peace in our schools in the turmoil you introduced is for those kids to suffer less access to their teachers and have more kids in their classes.

Minister, will you admit today that you're not interested in quality public education, or will you—

**The Speaker:** Order. The member's time is up.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I thank the honourable member for his contribution to this debate—the honourable member who said it's a question of fairness that we fund private education, private schools in this province. I welcome him to this debate. At least he can get some of the numbers right.

How many days did we in this House hear the honourable member and his colleagues say, "The government has this task force on extracurricular activities. They put out good recommendations. Why won't the government accept the task force on extracurricular activities?" Mr Speaker, we did. When we did, did they support the task force recommendations? Oh, no. Now the Liberals say, "You shouldn't have accepted this one, you shouldn't have accepted that one." Yet again, we hear them on both sides of the issue on a regular basis.

**Mr Kennedy:** When we used to have a minister of public education in this House, not one for private education, here's what that minister said: "I disagree with the task force. We shouldn't be increasing class sizes," and today we've heard again that there is an ideological, politically opportunistic bent on the part of this government that makes the students of this province come second.

Minister, I want to give you a chance: we in this party have a plan for improving public education, and we have said the investment has to be made to decrease class sizes. There are schools not far from here, like Fern Avenue public school, where grades 1 and 2 mixed classes are 31, 29 and 27. Minister, in your term you have increased class sizes. I want to know today if you will commit to implementing our plan to see class sizes

go down, or will you stand exposed to what is readily apparent, that you're not prepared to invest in the well-being of students in this province?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member brings up ideological and philosophical differences, etc. His own leader has no ideological or philosophical objection to funding independent schools. His own leader said that, so I don't know who he's talking about being ideological or philosophical.

We needed a solution for the extracurricular problem in some of our public high schools. Our students told us they wanted a long-term, sustainable solution. We sent out a task force of esteemed individuals who did an excellent job of bringing in recommendations. We consulted with our education partners. They said, "Adopt the task force recommendations." So we set aside our original position, because we were prepared to compromise to get those activities back for our students, and I have challenged all our other education partners: are they prepared to set aside their original positions? I have to tell you that they have said they are. Obviously the Liberal Party is not prepared to compromise. They said, "Let's let the students work longer and—"

**The Speaker:** I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

1500

#### IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE SERVICES

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** My question is directed to the citizenship minister and it concerns the whole issue of immigration and the financing of newcomer settlement programs in the Toronto area and Ontario.

This morning I had the privilege of attending another citizenship swearing-in ceremony, which shows that Canada has welcomed thousands of newcomers to this country. Also, I had a discussion with some of the new people who have come to the riding of Etobicoke North in the Toronto area. They are concerned as well about the financial inadequacy and the role that Ottawa does not seem to be playing in this whole issue. What we would like to know, Minister, is, how does the Ontario government's financial participation play up to and contrast with Ottawa's pretty Scrooge-like financial aid to newcomer programs in this province?

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors):** I'd like to thank the member for Etobicoke North for his question. Clearly, this government and all past governments of this province have acknowledged that cultural diversity is one of our province's great strengths. But the member raises some very serious questions about the level of federal support. Although the federal government sets the exact numbers of new immigrants to this country, they're not doing their fair share equally in terms of supporting these new Canadians.

Ontario welcomes almost 60% of all of Canada's new immigrants, and yet we're only getting 41% of the funding back from the federal government. These are tax

dollars we pay to Ottawa, but they don't come to us. In fact, if you go to our neighbour in Quebec, they receive only 14% of all new immigrants, but they're getting 33% of all the funding. So we are asking the federal government that they be more equitable in their treatment of immigration in this country and that Ontario taxpayers get the money that they—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The minister's time is up.

**Mr Hastings:** Thank you, Minister. It seems to me this sounds like chapter 2 of ongoing discrimination by Ottawa against Ontario. We have it in job training upgrades; we have it in newcomer settlement programs.

What kind of a strategy are you planning to put in place to rectify this Scrooge-like treatment newcomers in Ontario are getting and restore some basic, elementary fairness and decency to the whole issue of financial aid for newcomers to this province so they can make their rightful and appropriate contribution as citizens, workers, investors, participants in this province, instead of being discriminated against?

**Hon Mr Jackson:** Clearly, the federal minister responsible for immigration is hearing from Canadians and Ontarians on this issue about equity in funding. In the meantime, the province of Ontario continues to improve and strengthen its commitment to new Canadians who settle in Ontario. My own Ministry of Citizenship allocates almost \$4 million to over 90 community agencies that provide newcomer settlement programs across the province. My colleague the Attorney General has to find on an annual basis anywhere from \$13 million to \$15 million for legal aid for refugee appeals and claimants. The Ministry of the Attorney General also offers programs for immigrant women who are the victims of violence and cultural discrimination. The Minister of Education provides \$42 million per year for adult ESL training and provides ESL programming for more than 70,000 school-aged children.

**The Speaker:** Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up. Stop the clock.

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: For your information, the federal minister is ready to—

**The Speaker:** No, don't waste our time. Your member was going to ask a question. Let's not do points of order and waste time in here back and forth; otherwise, I'll let the clock run and we won't get any questions. We're not going to start with that. Please don't do that.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** I have a question for the Minister of Education. Minister, St Timothy school in Don Valley East has 11 portables on-site. The school was opened in 1964 to 200 students. Today, of 600 children at St Timothy, half are cramped in portables that are poorly lit.

Given the conditions at St Timothy's school, how can you justify providing half a billion dollars for private

school vouchers while—and I want to quote your 2001 budget on page 67—you provide \$16 million in capital for the entire province of Ontario. So your priorities seem to be half a billion in private school vouchers, yet the public system received \$16 million in capital expenditures. Can you justify that, Minister?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** First of all, if the honourable member has the budget in front of him, he will know that the amount of money for the tax credit is \$300 million, not the figure they keep trying to put on the public record, because it's not an accurate figure. Secondly, if he's reading the budget, he will also know that school boards get, and will be getting this coming school year, \$13.8 billion in resources. We have in Ontario the biggest school-building boom we have seen in years. Under this government, not under the honourable member's government, we have actually for the first time seen a reduction in the number of portable classrooms in those schools, in those communities, in the province that were in desperate need of a new school. The way we fund education, the way we provide funding to school boards, allows them to build faster than the way your government funded those school boards, sir.

**Mr Caplan:** Obviously that's not going to help the students in St Timothy's school. I'd like to relate to you another school in Don Valley East, Lescon public school. Lescon needs its roof replaced, but the Toronto District School Board can't afford to do it because of the way you fund capital in Ontario. They require \$80 million annually, but they also have a backlog of over \$300 million. The way you fund capital in the province of Ontario, the students at Lescon and the students at St Timothy's are going to be waiting a very, very long time.

Once again, I want you to justify your priorities. You provide \$500 million for private school vouchers, yet you only provide \$16 million for capital expenditures for public education in Ontario. Minister, stand in your place and try to justify that.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, the honourable member may wish to justify his position on independent schools. I think that would be more important for the voters in his riding. But secondly, he deliberately keeps misreading the numbers. We are putting \$13.8 billion into the public education system. We are putting money into the system for capital for new schools in a way that has had a 9% decrease in the number of portable classrooms in this province, the first time any government has helped support that kind of school construction that we needed in those communities with growing populations.

If the honourable member is now asking the government—because he doesn't agree with the decisions that the Toronto school board has made in terms of the allocation of their resources—to take over from the Toronto school board, he should be clear because they have the responsibility, as they always have and—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The minister's time is up.

## AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. We've often heard that the agri-food industry in Ontario is a major contributor to the province's economy. Farmers and rural people in my riding don't mind, and I would even say relish, the opportunity to support the rest of the province—even Toronto—when called on to do so and when they are able. Given that the past year has been one of challenges for our farmers, can you provide me with an update on the status of the agri-food industry in Ontario?

**Hon Brian Coburn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I thank the member from Perth-Middlesex. Despite a year of depressed commodity prices, poor weather and unfair international subsidies, our agricultural sector continues to show its competitive spirit. In fact, in 2000, Ontario led the country in agricultural production, with total farm cash receipts of over \$7.5 billion. That translates into more than 23% of Canada's total production. Furthermore, Ontario accounted for 26% of the national total for investments in agricultural operations.

We continue to work with them. We have such a competitive agricultural sector that they're taking advantage of some new opportunities, value added into their product, and continue to be leaders now and on into the future in terms of the marketplace.

**1510**

**Mr Johnson:** My riding of Perth-Middlesex is made up of the city of Stratford, a lot of good farmland, and small towns, communities such as Komoka, Listowel, St Marys, Milverton, Mitchell, Ailsa Craig and Thorndale. I note that there are more than 1,200 food processing establishments in Ontario. Has this segment of the agri-food industry fared as well?

**Hon Mr Coburn:** I'm pleased to tell you that in addition, in agri-food exports Ontario leads all other provinces as well, in the year 2000 shipping almost \$6.8 billion worth of products. This is a \$200-million increase over 1999.

Ontario's industry leaders are well on their way to reaching the 2005 target of 25% of Canada's exports, which translates into 1% of world trade. As the member knows, Ontario is a good place to invest. The recent budget announcements by the Minister of Finance only make it an even better place to invest. In fact, Ontario accounted for about 41% of the national total of new investment in the food and beverage sector.

## MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT STAFF

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. As we approach the anniversary of the Walkerton tragedy, your own ministry staff, in a report to the inquiry, says there is not enough staff to do the work, that the piles of work on

their desks keep coming in faster than they can do it. They say, "We can only pick our battles to the detriment of other violations we find." They say that when your government closed the labs in London, Kingston and Thunder Bay and privatized municipal water tests, it cut the heart out of the MOE. They say staff are being asked to write briefing notes which don't just give facts, but also have to put the correct political spin on it. Your staff tell you, Minister, "We fight fires instead of taking a preventive approach."

This is pretty serious stuff. I'm asking you, why are you ignoring your own experts and continuing to put Ontario's drinking water at risk?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** The member knows full well that any information that is presented to the commission is information that cannot be discussed. Certainly we are looking forward to receiving the recommendations from the commission at the end of the day.

But let me say that in response to the information that certainly is of utmost interest and concern to all of us, and that is the protection of our water system and the provision of safe water, this government has done what you never did. We have put in place a drinking water protection regulation. It is the toughest water standard in all of Canada, and as a result we have hired additional staff. We have ensured that people are testing water, they are sampling water, and they—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

**Ms Churley:** Minister, that was an amazing answer. Your ministry tried to stop us from getting FOI requests. The Walkerton inquiry lawyer said that there is nothing stopping those requests coming to us. Furthermore, nothing's stopping you from discussing anything that's been discussed there.

Minister, under your watch seven people died, and you got applause for that answer. What you're being told today is to hire more staff, improve the training, give them legislation they need to do the job, like the Safe Drinking Water Act, not just regulations. Be proactive instead of moving from crisis to crisis. Put the money back into solid infrastructure for Ontario's drinking water, and stop making them put your spin on their reports. That is what the staff is asking you today.

I'm going to ask you, when will you give your experts the support they need to protect Ontario's drinking water?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** The member opposite obviously has absolutely no idea of what is going on or what is happening. We have a very strong enforcement presence. We are ensuring that we are moving forward. We have hired 130 new enforcement and investigative-related staff to ensure that we can protect the health of people in this province and also the environment. I'm very pleased to say that the number of charges that were laid in 2000 increased by 25% from 1999. I am also very pleased to say that the fines issued in 2000 cost the polluting industry more than \$2.6 million, which was a 74% increase

from the years prior to 1999. The number of orders issued from 1999 to 2000 increased by—

**The Speaker:** Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** I have a question for the Minister of Education. You have cut \$1.2 billion from the education budget. We pointed out earlier today that you have cut it out of things like heating for schools and textbooks. In communities right across this province, from Windsor north to James Bay and from the Lakehead to Kingston, you're closing schools. Boards are being forced to close schools because of a lack of funding from your government. You are ripping the heart out of public education.

How can you stand here and deny you have cut \$1.2 billion when you have? The record is clear: you've cut \$1.2 billion. What do you say to those school boards that cannot provide adequate heating, that cannot provide enough textbooks and cannot provide an adequate ratio of teachers to students in elementary schools across the province? How do you defend your intransigence on that issue of your \$1.2-billion cut to public education in this province?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I'm not in the habit of denying things that are not true.

When this government assumed office in 1995 the expenditures for public education in this province were \$12.8 billion. Today they are \$13.9 billion. Even in the old math, even in the new math, that is an increase. We have been funding far and beyond enrolment growth. That is an investment I support. That is an investment I think is necessary for a public education system. That is an investment we are going to continue to make each and every year for the public education system.

I understand the position of the honourable member's party on this. He thinks we should let school boards go out and raise property taxes in order to put money into the public education system. We do not agree with that position. We are continuing to fund public education. We are continuing to put in legislation that ensures classroom dollars stay in the classroom, legislation that the honourable member and his party opposed, quite frankly, but we thought it was an important accountability measure for the public—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The minister's time is up.

**Mr Duncan:** Minister, you have said repeatedly that your government this year is going to spend \$13.8 billion on education and that you have not cut \$1.2 billion from education. In this House on May 4, 1999, then Education Minister David Johnson said, "I assure the member opposite that over \$15 billion will be spent this year for all school and education programming in this province." Who is right, Minister? Are you right today when you say you haven't cut \$1.2 billion? Are you right, or was

Dave Johnson right two years ago when he said you spent \$15 billion? What number is right, his number or your number? Or was John Snobelen right on September 11, 1997, when he said your government spent \$14 billion?

You're contradicting your own predecessors in your own government. Who's right? Were Dave Johnson and John Snobelen right or are you right? Which one of you is right?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The facts are very clear. If you compare apples to apples, instead of the Liberals' favourite trick of comparing apples to oranges, the investment in the public education system is very clear: \$12.9 billion to \$13.8 billion in this coming school year, an investment of over 360 million new dollars in this new school year because we agree that is needed. Secondly, the Liberals like to discount the other money that school boards had, specifically for teacher compensation, for heating and fuel costs, for special education, which they received on top of the 360 million new dollars they got for this coming school year.

Our investment in public education is important, it's continuing and it's increasing, because we know that those hard-working teachers, those students, those parents, deserve that investment in the public education system.

1520

#### ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The news of the creation of the OIT, Ontario Institute of Technology, was very well received in Durham riding, and indeed all across Durham region. I should mention that over the past decade, Durham College president Gary Polonsky, the board and the entire community have worked tirelessly to make this dream a reality for our young people.

Durham College has earned a solid reputation for delivering high-quality education. I think that the large number of students who have found employment after completing their education speaks volumes for the success of Durham College's teachers and administrators as well as students.

Minister, what relationship do you see between Durham College and the new Ontario Institute of Technology?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** The member rightly points out that Durham College has an excellent track record, and we hope to build on that through the launch of an Ontario Institute of Technology.

A major feature of this new degree-granting institution will be the strong collaboration between a university education and a college education for our students. In many fields the job market is asking for a combination of theory and practice. It's the best way to make sure, to

ascertain that our students acquire both the knowledge and skills that the employers in our province are increasingly looking for.

It will be a polytech education that is provided at this new institution of technology. I will say that I see a very close relationship between Durham College and the Ontario Institute of Technology in the years ahead.

**Mr O'Toole:** Thank you, Minister, for that. I want to publicly thank you for making a dream come true.

Durham region is one of the fastest-growing areas of North America and demand is certainly there for post-secondary institutions. Last spring, many of my constituents let me know of their support for a university in the east part of the GTA, people like Diana Williamson, Gerry Taylor, Helen Smith, John Phillips, Leanne Donnelly, Stephanie Walker, Paul Scott, the Erwin family, Diane Milonas and Brett Puckrin, just to name a few.

This new institution will clearly offer a unique and integrated educational experience that will no doubt appeal to students across Ontario; in fact, it's one-stop education. What role do you see for the Ontario Institute of Technology in our greater post-secondary education system?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** Our vision supports a leading-edge institution that will focus on providing our students with a seamless transition between our college and university system.

This institution will also link education and skills training with the needs of the marketplace, which is so important, to ensure responsive and up-to-date education for our students.

Much of the skilled labour shortage problem or challenge in our province is faced in the eastern greater Toronto area. We have every expectation that this new institute of technology will help address the problem.

It will also serve the community and our students in ways that use our resources wisely to accommodate—and I underline—the schedules that our students and the employers' needs. That's very important. This is a wonderful opportunity to combine employer demand and skills training with existing resources to maximize this opportunity for our students.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As you no doubt are aware, Professor Robert Bish, in an urban paper commissioned for the C.D. Howe Institute, referred to your government's "tendency towards amalgamation as using discredited 19th century ideals in the 21st century." Specifically, he noted that "amalgamation tends to eliminate the very characteristics of local government that are critical to the most successful and least costly governance systems." He also noted that small local governments generally provide better local government at less cost than monolithic amalgamations.

Minister, do you agree with the Bish analysis that amalgamated municipalities are more costly, and is that why your government has now gone on record as saying there will be no further amalgamations without the consent of municipalities and the citizens they represent?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I would like to thank the member for the question, and I'd also like to thank a busload of residents from the city of Kawartha Lakes who travelled to Toronto to be part of question period. I look forward to meeting with them after question period.

I do want to just make a few comments. One is that there have been a number of restructurings and amalgamations in this province, particularly since 1995-96. Till now we've gone from over 800 municipalities to about 447. I find it passing strange, the Liberal position on amalgamation now. Let me quote some of the positions that I've heard in the past from your party.

"A single city will save tax dollars, reduce bureaucracy and streamline services. It will put Ottawa on a more even footing with other cities around the world when it comes to competing in today's global economy for investment and jobs." That was from Dalton McGuinty, Liberal Party.

We've also got two other quotes from an area of the province that you're quite familiar with. "It's time this government took some action toward municipal restructuring in Hamilton-Wentworth. They have been sitting on the issue for too long. We"—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

**Mr McMeekin:** Mr Minister, I appreciate your acknowledgement of the over 100 people who are here from Victoria county and your reference to meeting with them after question period. I think they would appreciate that.

They understand, as Professor Bish has highlighted in his paper, that, "Single governing councils and large organizations are simply incapable of dealing with the diverse range of issues that governments must deal with." Frankly, they're here today to express their annoyance with the very process that has led to the forced amalgamation of Victoria county.

I'm very familiar with forced amalgamation without consent, unfortunately. People in my riding are still livid with how your government failed to listen to us. The process, frankly, was a disgrace.

Minister, we've now got some recent evidence that it hasn't worked. Are you serious about your commitment to meet with these good people after? Because if you are, I'd love to be there and hear the conversation.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** As I mentioned, the municipal amalgamation referred to in your area was encouraged by the local Hamilton members. They criticized us for not acting quickly enough. In Victoria county they've been studying restructuring since 1974. And for the members of the House who aren't familiar with my area, they came very close to a local solution. Under Bill 26, for the first time in the province's history, Queen's Park could not dictate what took place in the local rural areas. It had to

be asked for by a democratically elected council. Two councils—the township of Emily and the town of Lindsay—requested a commissioner.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** The facts are the facts. I met with the clerks, I met with all the local councils of the 17 municipalities and told them to find a local solution. Two thirds wanted change. If they had wanted no change, that was fine with this government. But of the two thirds that wanted change, they couldn't agree on what the new structure should be, and two townships requested a commissioner. We encouraged them to find a local solution. They came within two votes of doing that and—

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up. New question.

#### LAKE RESTORATION

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, two weeks ago I had the pleasure of visiting your district office in Sudbury where I was treated to a demonstration of the canine unit and shown the reintroduction of elk in the Burwash area and also shown the shelterwood forestry program. I was also given a package with respect to a presentation called the northeastern lake trout enhancement project.

Minister, lake trout are one of the premier sport fish in northern Ontario, and this project is of great interest to me and of great interest to the people of northern Ontario. Where is the funding coming from for this project, and why would we be doing this project now?

1530

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources):** I want to thank the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka for the excellent question today and for taking the time and the effort to visit the district office in Sudbury and to find out about the things that are happening in that part of Ontario.

Ontario has some 25% of the world's lake trout areas. Almost half of those are located in northeastern Ontario. Lake trout populations are subject to a variety of stresses, including the acidification of lakes, overharvesting and the introduction of exotic species.

I'm proud to say that our government is launching, under Ontario's Living Legacy, a five-year project to protect and restore northeastern Ontario's lakes and to enhance this globally significant lake trout resource. We're doing that in partnership with Laurentian University, the northern Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

**Mr Miller:** In follow-up to some of the points you made, lake trout were not successfully reproduced in acid-damaged lakes. Are you saying to the House today that those lakes have recovered from the acid damage that reached record levels in the 1980s and that those lakes which had virtually died as a result of acid rain can now sustain a healthy lake trout population?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I'm pleased to inform the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka that after hard work by many, many people in northeastern Ontario, some of the acidification damage to those lakes has in fact been reversed and those lakes now hold and harvest lake trout once again. Reversing acid rain damage in these lakes is a significant achievement, and it shows how well we can protect and preserve the environment. That's what Ontario's Living Legacy is all about, and I'm proud to make that statement in the House today.

#### HEALTH CARE CONTRACT

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** My question is to the Acting Premier. Why does the Harris government believe the public of Ontario does not have a right to see the contract with the private, for-profit operators of the cancer care clinic at Sunnybrook?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** As the honourable member knows, there are many rules around the tendering process. I'd be very happy to take up her concerns with the minister.

**Ms Lankin:** Minister, your backroom deal with the operators of this private, for-profit clinic is proving to be very costly to the taxpayers. We know, from what we've been able to learn, that we are getting less for paying more money than we would in the publicly accountable, not-for-profit system. Despite your government's repeated rhetoric about openness, transparency and accountability, you refuse to make the contract public. Despite repeated requests from the New Democratic Party for the right of the public to see how taxpayers' dollars are being spent, you have refused to make that contract public.

The question is very clear: why does the Harris government believe the public does not have a right to see that contract?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I refer this to the associate Minister of Health.

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]):** I know that the Ministry of Health and the Minister of Health have informed the member opposite that she has the ability to go to one of the parties to the contract and see the contract. That has happened. We know that in the province of Ontario we've had a backlog in cancer treatment, and now that backlog is being taken away. The people of Ontario are getting quality care. They're getting it at home, as they need it and as quickly as they need it, and that's good news for all Ontarians.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** Yesterday I rose to highlight several of our government's new initiatives to support and improve post-secondary education in our province. In the course of my remarks, I informed members that we will be

supporting the Premier's Platinum Awards for research excellence by spending \$10 million over three years. I would like to advise the House that in fact this sum is to be spent over six years.

#### PETITIONS

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas cancer patients in Ontario requiring radiation treatment face unacceptable delays and are often forced to travel to the United States to receive medical attention;

"Whereas many prescription drugs which would help patients with a variety of medical conditions such as macular degeneration, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, diabetes and heart failure are not covered by OHIP;

"Whereas many residents of St Catharines and other communities in Ontario are unable to find a family doctor as a result of the growing doctor shortage we've experienced during the tenure of the Harris government;

"Whereas many assistive devices that could aid patients in Ontario are not eligible for funding from the Ontario Ministry of Health;

"Whereas community care access centres have inadequate funding to carry out their responsibilities for long-term and home care;

"Whereas the Harris government has now spent over \$235 million on blatantly partisan government advertising in the form of glossy brochures and television and radio ads;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Conservative government of Mike Harris to immediately end their abuse of public office and terminate any further expenditure on political advertising and instead to invest this money in health care in the province of Ontario."

I affix my signature. I am in complete agreement.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** I have petitions from the people who came to Toronto from Victoria county today, who are still with us in the galleries. The petition I'm reading today has 457 signatures, but there are thousands more. I shall read it now.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the citizens of Victoria county had no direct say in the creation of the new city of Kawartha Lakes; and

"Whereas the government by regulation and legislation forced the recent amalgamation, against the will of the obvious majority of the people; and

"Whereas the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable local

government, nor the provision of better services at reduced costs; and

"Whereas the promise of tax decreases has not been met, based on current assessments; and

"Whereas the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation have already exceeded the promised amount by over three times,

Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance it has coerced on all local residents."

For shame. I will affix my signature to this petition.

#### ELECTRICITY GENERATING STATION

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** Again, I rise with this very important petition that affects the riding of Oakville, of the member Gary Carr, and myself in Mississauga South and, as a matter of fact, wherever the wind blows with emissions.

It's a petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas Sithe Energies Canadian Development Ltd is actively pursuing the development of an 800 MW electricity generating facility;

"Whereas the 14-hectare parcel of land on which the station is proposed is located on the east side of Winston Churchill Boulevard in the Southdown industrial district of Mississauga;

"Whereas Sithe has stated its commitment to an open dialogue with communities where it has a presence and to being responsive to the concerns of the same; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has a responsibility to ensure the safety of Ontario citizens and to determine how this facility will impact those who live in its immediate, surrounding area,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario direct the Ministry of the Environment to undertake a formal environmental assessment of the Sithe project."

I happily add my signature to this petition, and I'm going to give it to Thomas, our page, to take to the table.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this government is planning a complete overhaul of the developmental services system, which could result in the closure of the three remaining developmentally handicapped regional centres;

"Whereas suitable quality medical, behavioural, social, emotional and spiritual services are readily available in the three remaining centres;

"Whereas there is a distinct deficiency of services available in the private sector, including dentists, kinseologists, psychiatrists, physicians, and emergency services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ask that you recognize that the three remaining centres for developmentally handicapped individuals are providing a community for the residents that live there, and acknowledge that these centres deliver quality care and services by keeping them open and by directing private/public agencies with limited resources and services to access the resources at the centres and to work in partnership with them."

It is signed by a number of residents from Charing Cross, Chatham, Wheatley and Blenheim and I affix my signature to this petition.

1540

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I've got a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the citizens of Victoria county had no direct say in the creation of the new city of Kawartha Lakes; and

"Whereas the government by regulation and legislation forced the recent amalgamation against the will of the obvious majority of the people; and

"Whereas the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable local government, nor the provision of better services at reduced costs; and

"Whereas the promise of tax decreases have not been met based on current assessment; and

"Whereas the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation have already exceeded the promised amount by over three times;

"Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local and municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance it has coerced on all local residents."

That's signed by Warren Grant and Peter White, both of Kirkfield, and by hundreds of thousands of others as well as by myself. I serve it upon the Clerk now.

#### DIABETES TREATMENT

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas over 500,000 people in Ontario have diabetes; and

"Whereas to the expense of treating diabetes, many people cannot afford the ongoing expense of treating diabetes, and if left untreated or improperly managed,

diabetes can lead to blindness, vascular disease, kidney disease, neuropathy and other problems; and

“Whereas today, more than ever before, people with diabetes can expect to live active, independent and vital lives if they make a lifelong commitment to careful management of the disease; and

“Whereas by providing the resources to successfully manage this disease, the government can ensure more efficient health care for people with diabetes at a reduced cost to the health care system;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That all diabetic supplies as prescribed by an endocrinologist be covered under the Ontario health insurance plan.”

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** I'm proud to stand here with the fabulous people of Fenelon Falls and Bobcaygeon to read this wonderful petition about Victoria county.

“Whereas the citizens of Victoria county had no direct say”—can you believe it?—“in the creation of the new city of Kawartha Lakes; and

“Whereas the government by regulation and legislation forced the recent amalgamation against the will of the obvious majority of the people; and

“Whereas the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable local government, nor the provision of better services at reduced costs; and

“Whereas the promise of tax decreases have not been met based on current assessment; and

“Whereas the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation have already exceeded”—shameful—“the promised amount by over three times;

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local and municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance it has coerced on all local residents.”

I am proud to affix my name to this petition and stand proud with the citizens of Victoria county—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is the word “shameful” in that petition?

**Mr Colle:** No, “pride” in Victoria county—

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Colle:** They have nothing to be ashamed of, Mr Speaker. They are proud taxpayers—

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. I wish I could say the same for you.

I want to direct to the member that petitions can be presented, and there are certain expectations, and they do

not include adding words in the verbatim thing, if that's the way you choose to present it.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Eglinton-Lawrence will bring himself to order.

Further petitions.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I side with the people of Victoria county, many of whom are here to make their point and to listen to the petitions as we read them.

“Whereas the citizens of Victoria county had no direct say in the creation of the new city of Kawartha Lakes; and

“Whereas the government by regulation and legislation forced the recent amalgamation, against the will of the obvious majority of the people; and

“Whereas the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable local government nor the provision of better services that reduces costs; and

“Whereas the promise of tax decreases have not been met based on current assessments; and

“Whereas the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation have already exceeded the promised amount by over three times;

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance it has coerced on all local residents.”

I attach my signature in support.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further petitions. The Chair recognizes the member for Durham.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. I have no intention of standing up all afternoon warning people to do things that they already know aren't allowed in here. If you decide that you would like to shout across, please consider that this is your last warning, the very last.

I apologize for interrupting the member for Durham.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It may explain why I introduced the bill on decorum earlier today.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments; and

“Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

“Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95 (Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000) as soon as possible."

I am pleased to endorse and to sign in support of this petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham.

1550

### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the safety of our communities is of the utmost importance; and

"Whereas in February of 2000 an automobile left the exit ramp after losing control at Highway 401 and Victoria Park Avenue in Toronto and struck a residential building located at Farm Greenway; and

"Whereas many families who live in the Farm Greenway community have children who play in the backyards next to the Highway 401 and Victoria Park Avenue exit ramp; and

"Whereas the provincial government has taken corrective action in a similar circumstance in the Song Meadoway community, namely Highway 404 and Steeles Ave, after a fatal accident at that location; and

"Whereas the safety, well-being and peace of mind of the residents can only be restored by the presence of a proper safety barrier;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Minister of Transportation to take corrective action immediately by erecting a safety berm or proper barrier to protect the families of Farm Greenway from potential catastrophe."

I wholeheartedly endorse this petition and have affixed my signature to it.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### 2001 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 15, 2001, on the amendment to the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I want to take the opportunity to comment on the budget the government has brought in. I want to say a couple of things to the members across the way that need to be said from people who live in a part of the province that is quite far from here: northern Ontario. This government could have chosen, in its budget, to make statements about principles that would have been important for the people of northeastern and northwestern Ontario, that could have gone a long way to addressing a number of the issues that

we, in our special part of the province, think should have been raised.

The government, for whatever reason, decided not to say anything in this budget for northern Ontario. There's nothing in this budget that says, "We, the province of Ontario, are going to make some major investments when it comes to programs or services in northeastern or northwestern Ontario." The government made no mention whatsoever in the budget about anything that could have helped.

I want to suggest, by way of this debate, some of the things the government could have done when it comes to the budget that was read in the House last week. For example, many members of the Legislature would know that right now the government is undergoing a massive process to privatize the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission, which was set up by the provincial Legislature almost 100 years ago to be one of the most important things to northeastern Ontario when it comes to the development of our economy and of northeastern Ontario. Many people would know that if it had not been for the creation of the TNO railway some years ago, much of the economic spinoff we've seen in northeastern Ontario would never have happened. We wouldn't have seen Cobalt developed; we wouldn't have seen what happened in the communities of Kirkland Lake or Timmins or Kapuskasing or Hearst or many other places across northeastern Ontario if it hadn't been for that.

This government has decided, all of a sudden, that it's going to move unilaterally, against the express wishes of the people of northeastern Ontario, to privatize the ONTC. I say to this government that you could have used your budget as a way of saying, "Yes, we will make the proper investments in northern Ontario to make sure we help that special part of the province to develop its economy and provide services to the people of northeastern and northwestern Ontario." But no, you decided to be silent. Now we look at what's happening in the economy across the north and this government says they wonder why the economy in northern Ontario is slowing down. I'll tell you, it's frightening.

This morning, we met with the community of Elliot Lake, which has basically seen over 4,500 jobs leave over the past 10 years because of what's happened with uranium prices. This government could have made investments in places like Elliot Lake. They could have made investments in places like Timmins or Hearst or Kapuskasing. But no, they made none of that, no mention of that whatsoever.

I would say that one of the investments this government could have made by way of this budget was to say, "We are prepared to assist the ONTC. We are prepared to put the type of money that's necessary in the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission to make sure we upgrade the infrastructure so it becomes a train that is conducive to providing good service and speed to move people a little quicker from northern Ontario to the south and back again." They could have made those investments so we could have looked at the Ontario Northland

train as a train that could have been there in order to help develop and promote tourism in northeastern Ontario. Instead, this government decided to be absolutely silent when it came to the types of investments that could be made.

I want to say to this government, "Shame." I want to say to the government that you could have made a choice to invest some of the money from the budget of Ontario in the ONTC in order to provide the kind of funding they need to upgrade the infrastructure and do the kinds of things that need to be done at Ontario Northland in order to be able to promote and build on the successes they've had in the past and to build toward the future.

For example, we know in northeastern Ontario that tourism can be and should be a very important part of our economy, as well as the natural resource industries that are there now. What is needed in order to really spark the economy of northeastern Ontario on the tourism side is some leadership on the part of the provincial government, because there is no one community, either Kapuskasing or Cochrane or Cobalt or Timmins, that has the wherewithal to do it on their own. They are looking to their senior level of government, in this case the provincial government, and saying, "Why don't you invest with us? Why don't you work with us as northeastern Ontario municipalities to develop that part of the economy that could be a real boon for the northeastern Ontario economy?" Instead, this government decided not to.

Here are some of the things you could have done:

One of the things that we know we need is an investment in the track system. We need to be able to upgrade the rail bed for the passenger rail service so that when the train leaves Cochrane on the way to Toronto, that train is able to roll at a higher speed in order to cut the amount of time it takes to go from Cochrane to Toronto and back again. That way it would encourage more people to take the train, not only from northern Ontario but quite frankly for people to utilize the train when coming back into our part of the province.

The government could have decided to invest money—I would argue not a lot of money; it probably doesn't take tens of millions of dollars—to give Ontario Northland the ability to go out and hire some private sector public relationists or people who understand how to pull together the type of campaign that we need in northeastern Ontario to be able to promote the tourism destinations across northeastern Ontario. Imagine if we'd use the Northlander as a vehicle to bring tourists into northeastern Ontario. Imagine what we could have done.

We would be able to, for example, go into markets like southern Ontario or the United States and Europe and promote the destinations that are offered to people to come and visit our very special part of the province. Because what is really needed, I feel and a lot of other northerners feel, is for the government to give the ONTC the kind of money it needs to first of all take stock of what tourist destinations we have available to people who want to visit our part of the province, all the way up to Peawanuck and down to Parry Sound, to take stock of

what tourist destinations there are and take a look at how we're able to try to attract private investment into those areas to augment those tourist destination areas so that there are things for people to do when they come as far as good facilities and being able to enjoy the destination.

We need to be able to take stock of that and to then put it into a package that says that if you come to northeastern Ontario, come on the Northland Express and visit our very special part of the province, we would have had the money to be able to attract tourists from not only the southern part of our province, but also from the United States and Europe.

Instead, the government decided to do nothing. Their only response up to now has been that they are wanting to cut the services that are—Mr Speaker, is there a quorum present? I just wondered.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Would you like me to check and see?

**Mr Bisson:** Please.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would the table check and see if there is a quorum present.

**Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** A quorum is present.

**Mr Bisson:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. That was very useful.

I just want to say to the government by way of this particular speech that you could have made the type of investments that are necessary to be able to invest here in northern Ontario, to be able to utilize the Ontario Northland to help develop not only rail passenger service for the people of northeastern Ontario, but also to utilize the Northlander to develop the tourism sector.

While I'm at it, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to allow my friend Tony Martin, the member for Sault Ste Marie, to split the rest of my time.

1600

**The Acting Speaker:** It's a reasonable request, but it's unneeded. You don't need it. If you'd like to split your time, feel free.

The Chair recognizes the member for Sault Ste Marie.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** Thank you very much, Speaker. I want to thank my colleague from Timmins-James Bay for being so generous with his time and for the comments that he just made here this afternoon regarding the budget.

I wanted to put on the record while I have a chance just a few thoughts on that now-infamous document that was delivered here last week to this Legislature. In doing that, I wanted to focus on a couple of things: one, yes, what was in the budget, because it will have a very dramatic and immediate effect on the lives of all of us who call Ontario home, but I want to also talk a little bit about what wasn't in the budget. That was any reference whatsoever to the plight that so many families are feeling across this province these days as the agenda of this government unfolds and its impact is felt most directly on families who are at the bottom end of the income scale, families struggling to keep things together, families

struggling to put food on the table for their children, families trying to access the services that over so many years were available in this province that either are no longer available or that you have to pay for now out of your own money, and that's important.

The other thing I want to focus on is the seeming lack of any incentive or support or interest by this government in stimulating the economy of areas outside of the GTA and the 905—rural Ontario and northern Ontario—and the very amazing revelation in the budget document that this government failed to get out the door some \$157 million of the northern Ontario heritage fund. That's a fund that was set up by their predecessors, a Conservative government of past times, in order to take that very cyclical nature out of the economy of northern Ontario and put something in place that would be available to the entrepreneurs of that very important part of this province to help them over some challenges. When the bottom fell out of the economy in a particular area, as it so often does when you are resource-based in terms of what you do, there would be some support there to get into another line of work, protect your investment, or actually extend what you do to help the community in which you live.

This budget will once again increase the depth of poverty that exists in the province in that there is nothing in it at all to speak to the very debilitating circumstances in which so many of our families find themselves out there. There is nothing in here that gives us reason to believe that this government understands even the very difficult circumstances many of our fellow citizens find themselves in.

You will remember that one of the first initiatives of Mike Harris and his cohorts when they got to be government in 1995 was to reduce the amount of money available to the most vulnerable and at-risk of our families in our communities by some 21.6%. It was continual and continues to be the focus of this government and the Minister of Community and Social Services to this date to reduce even further the supports and services that are available to these families as they struggle to keep their kids in school, to make sure they have the food they need before they go to school so they can maximize their potential to learn, to make sure they have the clothes they need to wear to keep them warm, in the winter particularly, that they can participate in all those extra things that schools do to add some colour to the school experience for students, such as pizza days and field trips. Nowadays, because schools are lacking in the more basic of the resources they need to provide even textbooks for their students, they now have to charge for these events so that these families can provide for their children to do that.

A lot of the supports and services that were put in place by our government and by previous Liberal and Conservative governments were systematically done away with by this government. Not only that, but they then moved forward to make the criteria that need to be in place for people to actually qualify to receive assistance from the government narrower and narrower.

As a matter of fact, something I pointed out to the Legislature here very clearly before Christmas was that this government has turned the delivery of those most fundamental of services to the most needy among us over to a multinational corporation. It was at that time called Andersen Consulting and now is a morph to try to get rid of some of the baggage it carried from other jurisdictions by way of court cases and lost court cases, as it morphs into Accenture, the new name for the corporation.

This corporation was hired by the government to be ever more clever in how they make it less and less possible for poor people to access the system and get the supports they need to support themselves and their families, to actually participate in some of the education and training programs that are out there for themselves and their children so that they might participate in those programs.

This government in this budget has failed once again to answer the dilemma that's out there, presented by those circumstances. They had an excellent opportunity to respond to an initiative I've been pushing for over a month now, which is to say they're going to stop the clawback of the national child tax benefit supplement, the most disgusting of initiatives I've seen since I've been here some 10-plus years.

The federal government gives to low-income families some \$80 to \$100 per month per child to help with food costs, rent and clothing. This government has determined it is part of their agenda to actually claw back that money dollar for dollar when the provincial cheque goes out at the end of the month, so these families are not being helped by this federal program that was put in place to go a distance to reduce the level of child poverty in this country. That will not be helpful to the poor residents of this province.

Not only does your budget not stop the clawback of the national child tax benefit supplement, not increase support to people living with disabilities, not invest in affordable housing that is so desperately needed around the province, not invest in an economic development strategy to help dying communities in the north, but your budget does so much more than simply not helping the hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people in Ontario; your budget goes a long way toward making their lives much worse.

With this budget you have introduced a new twist where the funding of education is concerned in this province. You've introduced funding to private schools. As you are very well aware, this will lead to a mass exodus from the public education system you have so carefully devastated since you came to power. In short, you are creating a second-class public school system that only the poor will have no choice but to attend.

With this budget you have introduced the privatization of Hydro. As we've seen with the privatization of natural gas and telephone companies, this will only lead to huge rate increases. Who will be able to afford the 650% increases that have been experienced by Albertans, who only recently saw their system privatized?

The list goes on, but before my time runs out I must move an amendment to the amendment tabled by Mr McGuinty the other day.

**1610**

I move that the amendment moved by Mr McGuinty to the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on May 9, "That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government," be amended by deleting the words after "Recognizes that this budget fails our families and our future by" and substituting thereto the following:

"Taking inspiration from the provincial Liberal Party's policy of creating 'more choice' in the school system and by using the code word 'choice' as an excuse to implement a 'voucher' system for private schools—jeopardizing the future of public education in Ontario;

"Recognizing that this budget is driven by the Conservative government's strategic commitment to sell off Ontario through a systematic agenda of privatization, beginning with the privatization of electric power generation—with the support of the provincial Liberals;

"Recognizing that the deregulation of Ontario's Hydro system is a dirty deal that will create chaos in our electricity system and raise electricity prices;

"Recognizing that selling out our public schools system for private vouchers and selling off Hydro and the province's bank is part of a long-running and dangerous competition by the Conservative government to outdo the Ottawa Liberals' tax cuts for the wealthy, putting the interests of corporations ahead of the interests of working families;

"This House has lost confidence in this government."

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Martin moves that the amendment moved by Mr McGuinty to the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on May 9, "That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government," be amended by deleting the words after "Recognizes that this budget fails our families and our future by" and substituting thereto the following:

"Taking inspiration from the provincial Liberal Party's policy of creating 'more choice' in the school system and by using the code word 'choice' as an excuse to implement a 'voucher' system for private schools—jeopardizing the future of public education in Ontario;

"Recognizing that this budget is driven by the Conservative government's strategic commitment to sell off Ontario through a systematic agenda of privatization, beginning with the privatization of electric power generation—with the support of the provincial Liberals;

"Recognizing that the deregulation of Ontario's Hydro system is a dirty deal that will create chaos in our electricity system and raise electricity prices;

"Recognizing that selling out our public schools system for private vouchers and selling off Hydro and the province's bank is part of a long-running and dangerous competition by the Conservative government to outdo the Ottawa Liberals' tax cuts for the wealthy, putting the interests of corporations ahead of the interests of working families,

"This House has lost confidence in this government." Comments and questions?

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** Unfortunately the budget debate is coming to a close today at a quarter to 6. That will not give those of us who wanted to say something about this the opportunity to do so, so I'll just take the minute and a half I have here to do so.

Let me make three points very quickly. I think the people of Ontario have to realize that this government is cutting corporate taxes by \$2.2 billion. When you think what just a smidgen of that money could do in order to better the public health care system and in order to better the public education system, then we wonder why the government made the choice it did.

On the other hand, you may recall that last year the government really trumpeted the notion that it was going to introduce a lot of personal income tax cuts. This year we've seen they're not really doing that at all. They're not advancing with that theme; they are cutting corporate income taxes. That is the wrong thing to do at this stage.

Let me say one other thing very quickly. The government loves to talk about the fact that we're spending so much more money on health care spending than we did five years ago, when in actual fact—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Etobicoke North, come to order.

**Mr Gerretsen:** —the amount of the gross domestic product of this province that was spent five years ago was 5.7%; this year it'll only be 5.3%. So the government in actual terms is spending less of our gross domestic product than it did five years ago. To indicate to the general public that our that our health care system is in total chaos, that we cannot continue to spend the kind of money that we traditionally have spent on that, is totally, totally erroneous.

I would just ask the people of Ontario to condemn the government for what it's doing in initiating and instituting the corporate income tax cuts that it is trying to accomplish in this budget.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** Just quickly to the member for Kingston and the Islands, I happen to agree with the remarks you make around the issue of income tax cuts and how they have hurt us. In the 1999 election, we were waiting for the Liberals to join New Democrats when we said, "We've got to get rid of those income tax cuts that go to the top 10% of income earners in Ontario." The bulk of that money went to the richest people in Ontario. We were waiting for the Liberals to join us in that campaign, and you said, "No, that's not our campaign." But day in and day out, you rail against those tax cuts.

Gerry, come on. Which side are you guys on? Are you on our side, or are you just blah, blah here, and then when you go out there you take a different position? Come on. I agree with you, but take a consistent position before the election and after the election. Don't say, "We are against tax cuts," but then go into the election saying, "but don't tell anybody."

"We wouldn't touch that tax cut if we got elected." Please. It's not the way to behave as a political party. Come on. I get tired of this politics of the Liberal Party. I like clarity; I like consistency. I demand it of the Conservatives, I demand it of you, and I demand it of ourselves.

I support the comments of my colleagues from Sault Ste Marie and Timmins-James Bay because we are witnessing that the role of the Conservative government is to facilitate privatization, to facilitate the selling off of all the assets we have. They're selling off the Province of Ontario Savings Office: a money-making bank that belongs to the Ontario public, and they're giving it away. They're saying, "We don't want those assets any more. We're giving it away."

They say governments don't raise money. Why? They take it from us and then they give it away to the private sector. Some \$2.4 billion is going to the private sector, and they are taking \$2.4 billion from the public school system. It's wrong, citizens.

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** I'd like to speak about the comments made by the member for Sault Ste Marie. Perhaps the member wasn't here in the House the other day when I asked the Minister of Northern Development and Mines about the \$157 million in northern Ontario heritage funding that hadn't been spent this year. The minister did answer my question and he did say that all this money will be spent in future years. I'm very happy in Parry Sound-Muskoka to be seeing the northern Ontario heritage fund doubled from \$30 million to \$60 million. It is certainly a benefit not just for Parry Sound-Muskoka but all of northern Ontario.

I'm also very pleased to see in the budget the \$55 million annually being spent for people with developmental disabilities increasing to \$197 million a year. That's something that is of utmost importance to me. I was very pleased this past weekend to make announcements to community living of large funding increases for respite services. I'm very pleased to see that there is \$67 million over the next five years to construct facilities for people with developmental disabilities. This is something that I consider very important and that my constituents consider very important.

What this government is really doing in the budget is something that neither of the other parties does, and that is to create an environment of opportunity for the people of this province to succeed. I'm very pleased to see that.

I was also pleased to see the capital tax increased to \$5 million, because I had small credit unions in my riding coming to me and asking for that to happen. I'm glad to see the government listened and took this onerous tax off the small credit unions like the ones in Parry Sound-Muskoka.

1620

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** I'm pleased to comment on the comments by the members for Timmins-James Bay and Sault Ste Marie.

I refer to page 15 of the budget. The budget says "Housing Outlook Healthy." I wonder how a government

can actually say that when we have a vacancy rate in Ontario of 1.6%; in the city of Ottawa, 0.2%, the tightest rental housing market in the county.

We have a housing crisis, and yet this budget proclaims "Housing Outlook Healthy." What utter nonsense. It's really a shame that members of the government would try to put this kind of information, which is clearly untrue, into a public document.

To make the record very clear, we have a housing crisis. The housing outlook is not healthy. I know that the member touched on the affordable housing crisis that we have in every corner of the province.

I had the opportunity as well to ask a question of the Minister of Education about the budgetary priorities and policies of this government. The government spends \$16 million on capital expenditure for schools and for school boards across Ontario. To put that into some kind of context—I used to be a public school board trustee—we could not build one school for \$16 million. It is that expensive. So this is a ridiculous figure.

The minister said that there is unprecedent building going on. What the minister failed to say was what the government's policy is doing. There is \$500 million of debt that they are putting on to the books, on to the operating expenses of school boards in Ontario today; \$500 million per year taken away from the kids in the classroom that they are not going to have the ability to use. So it is a little accounting trick that they're using, but it's the students of Ontario who are paying for the budget priorities and policies. This budget should be condemned for this and a whole host of other reasons.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Sault Ste Marie has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Martin:** I want to first of all thank those people who responded to the comments of myself and the member for Timmins-James Bay and to reiterate that the bottom of the amendment we made was: "This House has lost confidence in this government."

This House has lost confidence in this government's ability to understand the challenges that confront so many people out there in Ontario today, in particular in northern Ontario and, most particularly, those citizens who are at the low-income level.

The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka got up talked about the contribution this government is making to northern Ontario and made the announcement, for probably the 12th or 15th time, that they're going to increase the amount of money going into the northern Ontario heritage fund by some \$30 million, to \$60 million. That's fine. They could increase it to \$200 million, but if they're not spending it in northern Ontario, what the hell is the point here?

We have in the budget here a clear indication of the commitment this government has to northern Ontario, a clear indication of its lack of understanding of the very desperate circumstance that many communities find themselves in where their economy is concerned in northern Ontario, by underspending the northern Ontario heritage fund by some \$157 million. The minister can get

up on his feet and say he's going to spend that tomorrow or next week or a year from now or 10 years from now, but who is to believe him when we know that he hasn't even spent the money he indicated he was going to spend over the last two or three years up to this point?

They announced two or three years ago that they were going to spend something like \$60 million per year in northern Ontario. If you multiply \$60 million by three, that's \$180 million dollars over three years. They couldn't get \$157 million out the door last year. Who is to believe you when you make promises any more, when in fact you couldn't spend \$157 million on northern Ontario in the past year?

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak in support of yet another balanced budget. That's the third in a row, and that's quite amazing in a province where former governments' budgets were judged by how much the deficit had grown from the previous year.

Everyone has to make choices that affect their lives on a daily basis. To be healthy, happy and successful, those choices need to be responsible choices. Government is no different. This budget is all about making responsible choices.

Ontario has come a long way since 1995. The economy has grown a staggering 25%. Almost 850,000 new jobs have been created, and tax revenue is up by \$15 billion. Last year we paid down the provincial debt by the largest amount in history: \$3 billion. In our Blueprint plan, we promised to reduce the debt by \$5 billion. After just two years, we're already 80% of the way. That means just another billion over the next two fiscal years to meet our commitment in the Blueprint. Some people say the money could have been better spent elsewhere. Well, currently 15 cents of every dollar the province spends goes to pay interest on the debt. That's \$8.8 billion a year. That is money that could be better spent elsewhere.

Credit rating agencies have recognized the government's balanced budget achievements and commitment to debt reduction. On January 29, 2001, Standard and Poor's upgraded the province of Ontario's debt rating to AA from AA-. This is the first upgrade since 1998.

The growth Ontario has experienced in the last six years did not happen by accident. Our government had a very deliberate plan to cut taxes, reduce barriers to growth, reduce the size of government, do better with less and balance the budget. The things we did to bring about that unprecedented growth will ensure we can better withstand whatever global economic changes come our way.

The business cycle is a fact of life. The best anyone can do is be well prepared. Thanks to the hard work and difficult decisions of the last six years, Ontario's economy is expected to grow by 2.3% this year and 3.6% in 2002. The cornerstone of our plan is to keep Ontario's economy strong, and the number one issue remains job creation. The more people we have working and spend-

ing, the more money we will have available to protect the things that are important to all of us: reliable health care, good schools and safe communities.

We believe that the best way to create jobs is to cut taxes. The tax cuts already implemented and those proposed in this budget mean that a family of four, with both parents working and earning \$60,000 a year, would pay \$2,345 less in Ontario personal income tax to spend however they see fit.

Every taxpayer has benefited from tax cuts, and the people earning the least have benefited the most. Some 660,000 low-income earners have been completely removed from Ontario's tax rolls since 1995. With the changes in this budget, an additional 75,000 people will pay no Ontario income tax. That's great news, but I'm sorry to say those 660,000 people will still have to pay federal income tax and I think that's a shame.

We're also proposing to eliminate the personal income tax surtax for 340,000 people. This tax currently kicks in on people earning \$50,000 a year, not exactly high-income earners—the middle class—and it is an unnecessary burden to those taxpayers.

Keeping Ontarians working means we must keep Ontario competitive. A package of initiatives in the budget, which we call Ontario's Edge, will give Ontario's businesses the edge they need by cutting corporate taxes, reviewing tax initiatives and protecting Ontario's quality of life. There are four key components to enhancing Ontario's Edge:

We will legislate the full schedule for corporate income tax cuts between now and 2005, to give businesses certainty so they can plan for the future. Businesses need to know how much extra money they will have each year in order to expand their businesses and hire new people.

We will begin to eliminate the job-killing capital tax by proposing a \$5-million capital tax deduction. This would increase the capital available for reinvestment, simplify the tax system and remove the capital tax liability for over 11,000 small and medium-size businesses.

We will review tax incentives to make sure they are effective. We want to ensure that our tax incentives are useful and relevant. An example would be the tax for fuel conservation, otherwise known as the gas-guzzler tax. This is brought in to encourage people to buy vehicles that use less gas. Is that tax doing what it was supposed to do? Does it need to be changed? We need to review it and see.

We will build on the quality of life in Ontario through clean air, good schools, efficient transportation and quality hospitals.

Budget 2001 looks to the future by ensuring that Ontario's growth is smart growth. To assist with smart growth, we will invest the remaining \$500 million of our billion-dollar SuperBuild Millennium Partnerships, and it will be dedicated to transportation and environmental initiatives, including \$250 million to address gridlock in the GTA and surrounding Golden Horseshoe region. We will also invest \$250 million in strategic infrastructure, including transportation and environmental projects to

support smart growth in eight other major urban areas across the province. The budget will invest \$609 million in provincial highways this year, including \$290 million in northern Ontario, and planning the strategic transportation corridors for tomorrow.

**1630**

It will provide \$25 million more this year to ensure that our drinking water is safe and our air is clean. This means that we will have increased the operating budget for the Ministry of the Environment by 51% since 1997-98.

All told, the Ontario government will spend \$60 billion this year. That's over \$5,400 for every man, woman and child in Ontario, yet \$4,300 of those dollars will be spent not by the Ontario government itself but by individuals and organizations in what is called "the broader public sector": schools, universities, hospitals and municipalities.

We believe that taxpayers deserve to know that every dollar they turn over to government is spent carefully and responsibly and for its intended purpose. To that end, the finance minister introduced the new Public Sector Accountability Act, which would require all major organizations receiving public money to balance their budgets every year and publish their planning objectives and track their progress against those plans.

Despite our own success in keeping government efficient, we acknowledge that we can still do better. That's why we will be undertaking a value-for-money review of all government spending. The review will ask questions like: is the government service meeting its original objective, how important is the service, who in fact should be delivering that service, and how can we do better for Ontarians?

These questions will apply equally to our most costly program: health care. People have told us that their highest priority is health care, and we agree. We have increased investment in health care by almost \$6 billion since taking office. This year alone we are increasing health care operating spending by \$1.2 billion. Health care not only consumes more dollars than it did in 1995, it consumes a greater share of the budget pie. In 1995, 38 cents of every program dollar we spent went to health care. This year it will be 45 cents. If we fail to correct the inefficiencies, in five years it could be 60 cents. The current rate of increase in health care spending is not sustainable.

We need to address the health care challenge on two fronts.

We need to reform federal funding to ensure Ottawa funds at least 50% of the increase. Currently their commitment is only 14 cents on the dollar.

We need to reform the health care system to make it work better and ensure sustainability. We need an honest and open dialogue with the people about the future of our health care, a dialogue that will explore all the options, and we can't wait 18 months for the federal government's royal commission report. That's why our accountability initiative will include hospitals and other health

care spending to see how we can spend more efficiently. It's also why we will be engaging in our own dialogue about the future of health care. We will ask doctors, nurses, patients and administrators to help identify the best way to deliver quality health care.

One thing that government needs to be involved in is caring for the most vulnerable people in our society. The initiatives in this area in the budget include \$67 million over five years to build new facilities for adults with developmental disabilities; \$55 million this year, growing to \$200 million by 2006-07, to enhance services for people with developmental disabilities and attract more quality caregivers; a \$20-million annual increase in funding for children's treatment centres; \$26 million over the next four years to improve the safety and security of abused women and their children in crisis by adding 300 beds to shelters and refurbishing another 100; \$3 million this year, growing to \$9 million annually, for counselling, telephone crisis services and other supports; an additional \$3 million this year and \$4 million annually in future years to expand education supports for children and youth in institutions; \$26 million over three years to upgrade, renovate and build or purchase new facilities for community mental health organizations; an additional \$8 million annually for children's aid societies; \$15 million annually to break the cycle of youth prostitution and punish those who exploit young people.

Building on growth in our economy requires an investment in our people, especially our young people. To that end we are increasing our commitment to the early years program by \$114 million this year, for a total of \$193 million. The early years program is an initiative that supports families and their children before they enter school. These programs are not about government replacing parents; they are about government helping parents. A step beyond that has already been done by setting up a system of local early years centres throughout the province.

Since 1995 the education budget has gone from \$12.9 billion to almost \$14 billion. This year we will increase it again by \$360 million. We are increasing the funding by more than the increasing current enrolment. This government remains committed to guarantee funding for the public education system. We have always put students and parents first.

Now it's time to address the concerns of parents whose children attend independent schools, often for religious or cultural reasons. This budget proposes a tax credit for parents paying and choosing to educate their children in independent schools. The equity in education refundable tax credit provides relief of 50% of tuition up to a maximum of \$3,500 for each child. The tax credit starts at 10% and rises by 10% for five years. This initiative is not about taking money out of the public education system. It is about fairness, equity and a parent's fundamental right to have input and choice in their child's education.

In the fall of 2003 a record number of new university and college students will arrive on campuses across

Ontario as all grade 12 and OAC students graduate together for the first time as the adoption of the new high school curriculum matures—one of those will be my daughter, hopefully, if she can make it from grade 11—commonly known as the double cohort. To deal with this increase the minister announced one of the largest investments ever made in Ontario's post-secondary system. Support for colleges and universities will be increased by \$293 million by 2002-04 to provide for facilities and staff. Through the SuperBuild fund and our partners, \$1.8 billion will be invested to create 73,000 new student spaces.

We need to continue to find creative ways to educate our young people and prepare them for the working world beyond college and university. Therefore the government will invest \$60 million in the start-up of the Ontario Institute of Technology which will provide a mix of university and college programs and one-stop shopping for students looking for a mix of academic and hands-on experience.

We will provide \$50 million over five years to update equipment and facilities for college apprenticeship programs, invest \$33 million by 2002-05 to double the number of entrants into apprenticeship programs in the skilled trades, and provide \$12 million to help foreign-trained professionals enter the Ontario workforce faster.

This budget, like all others, is about choices: choosing to trust people with more of their own dollars, choosing to keep paying down the debt, choosing to challenge the status quo in health care, choosing to demand an accounting from anyone who spends even one hard-earned taxpayer's dollar. I believe that our choices have been responsible, our commitment has been strong and, as a result, our successes will continue to be real.

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak to this budget today, Mr Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Gerretsen:** I would just like to pick up on one point that the member made at the very beginning and at the very end of the speech, and that deals with the public debt. As the member well knows, his government was directly responsible for adding an additional \$10 billion to the public debt of this province by having premature tax cuts. This government chose about three or four years ago to give individual tax cuts to people when we were still running an annual deficit.

The members across the way can laugh about it. It was a choice that you made. You allowed the public debt of this province to go from \$85 billion up to \$114 billion, a \$30-billion increase over a five-year period of time, and \$10 billion of that was specifically to pay for your tax cut that you implemented about three or four years ago. That's a choice they made. Wouldn't it have been a lot better if today we were not saddled with \$110 billion worth of debt but rather with \$100 billion worth of debt? It's a choice you made and it's an unwise choice because, as the member pointed out, the amount of money that we spend on interest on the public debt, which according to

the government's own figures this year amount to \$8.7 billion, is more than the government spends on community and social services.

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We all know that the most vulnerable in our society—the people who are involved with the Association for Community Living, the people who are involved with problems with autism, the people who are involved with and need special education assistance in schools, and I can go on and on: the people who are involved in Ontario Works and the social assistance program of this province—in effect have been denied their proper due because this government decided three or four years ago to implement the tax cut. That will be the last \$10 billion we'll ever pay back in this province. They made choices and they were the wrong choices for the people of Ontario.

**Mr Martin:** To listen to the member for Oxford, you'd think that this budget was the best thing since sliced bread. Let me tell you a little of the truth about what the budget is about.

The personal income tax cuts will yield very little. For most taxpayers, it'll be less than the \$200 cheque Ernie Eves gave them last year. This year's total in tax cuts, \$4.2 billion, is premised on an optimistic economic growth forecast. If the economy tanks, we'll sink into deficit in a hurry, and as early as next year.

Make no mistake: a budget that reduces funding for hospitals, a budget that favours private schools over public, a budget that ignores affordable housing and a budget that ignores public transit means Ontario taxpayers will pay more user fees and higher costs for private services, such as health care.

Hydro privatization could send Ontario into chaos. People will pay more for their electricity—a lot more. This year, California's electricity costs will be 10 times higher than only two years ago. We heard today from our leader that it's gone up even today, when deregulation took effect. Alberta deregulated its electricity sector, and power prices this year are projected to be 650% higher than in 1996.

While your bills are going up, the Tories refuse to raise minimum wage and they refuse to raise social assistance or to even simply stop the clawing back of the national child benefit supplement from our poorest children. The Tories say they're taking a few more families off the tax rolls with this budget. Most working families simply ask for a wage they can live on, a decent minimum wage that will keep the bills paid.

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** It's a pleasure to make some comments on the presentation made by my colleague the member for Oxford. First of all, I'd like to congratulate Finance Minister Flaherty on his first budget. I believe he deserves a lot of credit. I think this is a budget that, as he says, is based on growth, on good management, on effective use of taxpayers' dollars.

But why I'm really pleased to be here today is the fact that this was the third balanced budget in a row, I understand for the first time in almost 100 years. We've

seen the hard work done by our former finance minister and how he actually took a plan, the Common Sense Revolution, outlined that and laid that out to the people of the province of Ontario. Yes, that did include adding debt, but we inherited \$11 billion. I don't know if you remember that. Remember the \$1 million an hour on the backs of the working families of the province of Ontario? You should be really proud of yourself for making those kinds of comments.

What I'm very proud of is the fact that I was one of seven new members of this caucus. In 100 years, to be part of a group of seven people who took part in their first three balanced budgets in your first term of government, I'm very, very, very proud of that. I hope my colleague from Muskoka-Parry Sound, who will be here for a number of years, will follow the pattern that this government has laid out, which means balancing budgets and making good use of the taxpayers' money of the province of Ontario.

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):** I'd like to congratulate the member for Simcoe North for actually admitting that you did increase the debt. Some of your members don't want to hear that.

I want to respond to the member for Oxford. His daughter is in the double cohort. I wish her luck. I'm sure she's a good student, but she will need luck with this government, as far as post-secondary education is concerned.

Your announcement for post-secondary, for addressing the double cohort, was commented on as a landmark yesterday. In 1995, when you got in, you cut operating grants to colleges and universities by 15%. You can't deny that. The announcement by Minister Flaherty last week increases operating grants by just 1.8% after inflation. Let's compare 1995 and 2001. This hardly puts back the money you took away, never mind addressing in full the double-cohort issue.

If you don't believe me—and I don't blame you; we are the opposition—you should believe your own task force, Portals and Pathways, which said at least \$500 million is needed to address the double-cohort issue.

The other aspect on which I'd like to disagree with the member for Oxford is infrastructure. In the budget, \$100 million was put aside for infrastructure maintenance for colleges and universities. Your very own task force said many more millions are needed, that these deferred maintenance costs are huge.

In fact, this government has spent less overall on infrastructure than any government in the last 20 years. Tuition has more than doubled, and student debt is at the highest level it's ever been in the history of this province. SuperBuild, although it did add needed dollars to infrastructure, was a competition that left some institutions without the buildings they needed. Furthermore, what is the use of having buildings if you can't hire professors to teach the students in those buildings? This is hardly a landmark budget.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Hardeman:** I want to extend thanks to the members for Hamilton Mountain, Simcoe North, Sault

Ste Marie and Kingston and the Islands for their kind comments and their total agreement with my presentation.

There may have been a couple of areas where they drew out a few questions, and maybe we'd like to address a few of them. I would say to the member for Kingston and the Islands that the tax cut is what helped create the almost 850,000 new jobs that have been created—new taxpayers that have been created in the province to help us support the infrastructure we need.

I think it would be somewhat foolhardy not to continue down a successful road but go back to the road the member from Sault Ste Marie talked about, that the answer was just to keep spending more and more and increasing the deficit. He suggested that his leader had made some comments today. I can assure him that because the leader of the third party makes a comment, that does not make it gospel. Sometimes what he is saying is something I wouldn't agree with, and this happens to be one of those days.

As for the comments of the member for Hamilton Mountain, I can assure the member that I will take her best wishes to my daughter. She has a couple of years to go yet. In fact, she's one of the ones who have to go five years. She has to go the extra year to OAC. I suppose she is one of those who are the most disadvantaged in the change, because she is in the double cohort and also has to spend five years getting there. I will extend your best wishes to her.

I think the other comment about how we should spend more money, again, goes back to the NDP philosophy that where you get it doesn't matter; we just keep spending more and more money. Everyone knows that if you have a deficit, you will increase the debt.

I won't comment on the comments of the member for Simcoe North, but just say I—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'm pleased to join the debate on the budget. For me, at least, the budget document should kind of prepare Ontario for the future. I'm our party's finance critic, and my interest is heavily in the economic and financial area.

1650

There's no doubt, as we look ahead at preparing Ontario to be a world-class economy, that this budget fails in a number of areas. I'd like to go through each of them.

Let's recognize that Ontario is the most export-oriented jurisdiction in the world. Nobody relies on exports as much as Ontario. I'm thrilled that we have been able to compete so effectively around the world, but heavily in the US. Ten years ago, about 85% of our exports were to the US; today it's 94%. As I say, we now are the most export-oriented jurisdiction in the world. Ten years ago, exports were the equivalent of about 28% of our gross domestic product. Today, according to the government, they're the equivalent of about 55%. So our future very much depends on how well we can compete,

not just among companies here in Ontario, but among companies particularly in the US.

I'd like to go through a number of concerns I have about the budget. If you talk to the business community, as we all do, they will say that probably the most important thing for their future is the quality of our workforce. I've been watching on TV the state of Pennsylvania trying to attract industry to come and build in Pennsylvania. What is the single message they have in their commercial? It is about the quality of their universities and colleges. Then Governor Ridge says, "That's why you should be coming to Pennsylvania."

I don't think there's any question that that is going to be fundamental to our future. In this budget, we're spending \$300 million less on colleges and universities than Ontario did when Premier Harris became Premier. Every other jurisdiction in North America—all 50 US states and the other provinces—has recognized in the last five years that this is an area for investment. I don't call it spending; I call it legitimate investment. But we've cut spending here, and I say it was a mistake. There is money in here for the double cohort, to use the jargon, but that is merely to fund the incremental students; it's not to provide more and better resources per student. That's my first point on the future economy.

The second thing I would say: I went back to 1983-84, 16 years ago—I'll spend some time going back further. Ontario has never spent less money on capital, on infrastructure, than we are in this budget. The province of Ontario is spending about \$1.9 billion on infrastructure. It's a lot of money, but according to the government's own calculations it comes nowhere close to providing the funding to refurbish our infrastructure. As I say, you can look in the budget document. The budget document does go back 10 years, and any viewer can get the budget out. I'll just run through 10 years: 1992-93, \$3.6 billion on capital; 1993-94, \$3.6 billion; \$3.8 billion; \$3.6 billion—new government: \$2.6 billion; \$2.5 billion; \$2.2 billion; \$4.8 billion; \$2.1 billion; and, this year, \$1.9 billion.

Again, when we meet with the business community, the thing they tell us is that our physical infrastructure—our roads, our municipal infrastructure, our hospital and school infrastructure—is fundamental to the future. The government has chosen to spend less money in this budget than, certainly, all the way back to 1983-84 and perhaps even earlier.

The budget talks a lot about the SuperBuild Millennium Partnerships. This was going to be a sort of centrepiece of the government's plans. People in Ontario may remember that just last year Premier Harris announced, with a lot of fanfare, the billion-dollar SuperBuild Millennium Partnerships fund, and announced that we would begin this project with \$200 million per year for five years—\$1 billion. Guess what? The budget comes out, and in terms of the importance of these projects, how much do you think actually was spent in the fiscal year that just ended? Of \$200 million budgeted, \$4 million.

No government should ever spend money because they budgeted it, but I assume the government budgeted

it because they felt it was crucial and because these SuperBuild millennium partnership plans were fundamental. It didn't happen. This year they've budgeted \$100 million. By the way, the government is out having press conferences announcing these things, and they're not happening. So I say the second thing for our future economy is, how well are we refurbishing our infrastructure?

By the way, the government will often hold the 407 up as an example. Well, when the government announced the 407 sale, they said, "We're going to make sure that you don't get ripped off on the tolls. After 15 years, tolls could go up three cents a kilometre." That's not three cents a kilometre in a year; after 15 years, an increase of three cents a kilometre. Guess what? Most of the tolls have already gone up four cents a kilometre. They've had a price increase on the 407 three times in the last 15 months. They used to have a rush hour fee, which was a higher fee than at other times. Guess what the rush hour is now. It used to be 6:30 until 9:30 and 4:30 to 6:30. Now it's from 6 in the morning until midnight, seven days a week. It would be like the Air Canada Centre saying, "We're going to charge the platinum rate on all of our seats except the top 10 rows."

I just mention that because that's the second area where, in our opinion, the budget fails us.

The third area is in health care. In my opinion, Premier Harris is creating almost a crisis around health care to convince people there is only one solution, and that is that we're going to have to move away from our one-tier health care system. Yes, health spending is under pressure, and yes, health spending in this budget goes up I believe by 5.4%, but I would just say this. Since Premier Harris became Premier, health spending per year has gone up an average of 4% a year; that's been the average increase. So this thing is not wildly out of control. As a matter of fact, the Premier himself said it should be going up 5% a year just to account for an aging population.

My colleague from Kingston just mentioned in his remarks health spending as a per cent of gross domestic product, which is one measurement. It happens to be the measurement that most jurisdictions around the world use. It's the measurement we use when we're comparing Ontario to other jurisdictions, Ontario to the US. Provincial health spending as a per cent of our gross domestic product when Premier Harris took over was 5.7%; today it's 5.3%.

So I say to all of us, let's work to fix our health care system, but let's keep it in perspective. Let's not frighten the people of Ontario into thinking the sky is falling. It's not falling.

I would also say to the minister over there that the businesses that I deal with point out, as the government does in its documents, that employers in Ontario save \$2,500 per employee versus an employer in Michigan or New York or Pennsylvania or Illinois because of the way we fund our health care system. In Ontario and Canada—thank goodness, in my opinion—we've chosen to make

sure that regardless of your income, regardless of whether you are a senior or whether you are a young person who is not in the workforce—regardless of all of that—you are going to have access to universally accessible, quality health care. That saves every single employer in this province \$2,500.

On the revenue front, the government has announced that corporate taxes in the province of Ontario will be 25% lower than for our neighbours in the US. I say to us, why? Is it because our companies can't compete unless they are 25% lower? By the way, the 25% lower corporate taxes in Ontario are a substantial sum of money. It would be a minimum of \$2.5 billion, closer to \$3 billion. We've chosen to say we're going to have corporate taxes 25% lower than in the US. Why? Is it because we can't compete unless we have 25% lower than the in US? I frankly don't buy that.

I'd like to know from the government why it has made that decision. If we've decided we've got to be 25% lower, mark my words, the bordering US states will watch what we do and we are almost challenging them to cut taxes. We're almost saying, "You had better start cutting your taxes, because we're 25% lower." If we've got to be 25% lower, they cut, we cut, they cut, we cut.

**1700**

*Interjection.*

**Mr Phillips:** The member says, "More jobs." I say, if you accept the view of many business people and, by the way, the view of the government itself when it's attracting business, why would you locate somewhere? How are you going to build a long-term, sustainable business? The business community will say, and I agree with them, "You need competitive taxes. You can't have taxes out of line." I accept and support that. But you also have to have a quality education system, not \$300 million less. We have to fund our health care system, where our companies are saving—\$2,500 less per employee. You have to have an infrastructure that's sustainable. So I say to us, "What is the policy reason for taxes 25% lower than in the US?" I don't see the policy reason for that. If the business community says, "Listen, we can't compete unless we get a 25% lower tax cut," then I'd like to hear that. I don't hear that from the business community.

I appreciate that in the short term many people in the business community will applaud this, but there's no magic to this. The budget points out that our personal income tax rates now are at the same rate as in the US, in some cases a little lower than some states and in some cases a little higher.

Let's figure out how we are going to fund the things we want to do. Corporate taxes 25% lower? All right, we've got to make up \$3 billion there if we're competing with neighbouring US states. Personal income tax is equal. It won't come from there. Capital gains tax is now equal to the US. There's no magic. We are not as an economy dramatically more productive than our neighbouring US states. So it will come from consumption taxes, I assume. I assume that's where the government is going to have to find the money. I surely don't think we

are going to be able to compete long-term without investing in our education system, our health care system and our infrastructure.

I want to touch briefly on the personal income tax. Here I find it interesting. The government announced in the 1999 budget that it would be cutting personal income tax rates by 20%, a \$4-billion cut. As I suspected—in fact I asked the minister in the Legislature a few times, "Where are you on that tax cut?" and never got an answer—the government decided to kind of back off that one to the tune of about \$1 billion, I might add. This budget had about \$1 billion of personal income tax cuts in it. The second budget had about \$1 billion and this one had about \$1 billion. It wasn't the \$4 billion.

So the government recognized they were getting into a revenue crunch and they backed down on the 20% cut. They also said they would fully implement whatever cuts they were going to have in this budget year. It's now been dragged out for two years. I applaud them for that particular part, because I believe we do have a significant challenge on the revenue side, and I think it was a wise move to back off on some of it and to delay some of it. But it was an interesting move. I think they started to try and throw in some of the deindexation in the equation now and sort of play with—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Phillips:** Capital gains, exactly. Capital gains they do put in. They play with the numbers a little bit.

On the corporate tax one, I think Ontario needs a very serious debate around the policy issue. If we are going to attract businesses to locate and build in Ontario on the promise of a 25% lower corporate tax—"That's why you should be here"—I think it's foolish. I don't think it's sustainable. I think it's easily trumped by Mississippi and Arkansas, and it doesn't allow for a balanced approach to our total business environment.

I go back to the government's own documents on why you should come to Ontario. If you read those documents, they will say because of the quality education system. They used to talk a lot about low tuition fees, universally accessible post-secondary education. They talk about the enormous savings that you can have as an employer here in Ontario on your health costs. Make no mistake, one of the reasons—not the only reason—why we've done so well in the auto sector is because they have an enormous cost advantage, and a significant part of that is our health coverage.

On infrastructure, as I say, this budget has the smallest investment in infrastructure, at least going back to 1983-84, and the big project that the Premier often trumpets—the Minister of Finance actually had a press conference all about this—the SuperBuild millennium partnership fund, something that was supposed to be a centrepiece of it, last year they got \$4 million. As I say, I don't advocate spending money because there's money there, but if this was so central to our infrastructure theme, you question it.

So the debate is, and should be, around how Ontario ensures that we have a sustainable, viable, growing econ-

omy. Make no mistake, we've got a terrific environment here for it. We've been lucky over our history to have invested so much in our human infrastructure, our colleges, our universities, our hospitals, our health care system, our municipalities. But we're undermining those things.

I think all of us understand that it's like in our own personal life: if you start to let your house crumble, year by year it accelerates the deterioration and then it takes you an enormous investment to get it back up to speed again. That's what we're doing: we're letting our human and our capital infrastructure deteriorate. And for what? Again, I don't mean to make the business community angry here. I would just ask them, is it a good long-term strategy to say, "Come to Ontario and build in Ontario because corporate taxes are 25% lower," when it's at the expense of our human and physical infrastructure? Furthermore, a company that will come here for that reason will leave here for that reason. That is not a long-term, sustainable competitive edge. In my opinion, it's short-term and a bad policy.

For all those reasons, I think the budget simply doesn't prepare us well for the next decades.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions, comments?

**Mr Martin:** I'm always happy to follow the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. His thoughts are generally thoughtful, reflective and worth listening to. He covered a whole array of areas here in his critique of the budget that was presented last week. I'd just like to highlight a few of those.

In our view, the Tories are selling out our public system in favour of the slippery slope to privatization, which will not serve us well in the long haul, as the member just said. Tax breaks to private schools at the expense of the public system. Hospital underfunding, hospital deficits and a new law requiring balanced books put public hospitals in an untenable situation. So what they're saying to the hospitals is, "We'll help you with your deficit. We're going to pass a law to make it illegal." A knee-jerk reaction. Really dumb.

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Hydro privatization, selling off the Province of Ontario Savings Office, giving up another revenue stream for public funding. Tories are committed to tax cuts at all costs and this latest round will cost us dearly. The \$2.4 billion in corporate tax cuts equals \$2.4 billion taken out of our public schools. Hospital underfunding equals more private costs for patients and will put the system in peril. Hydro privatization means higher bills and possibly the chaos that we're now seeing in California. The sell-off of the Province of Ontario Savings Office equals \$2.8 billion on deposit that could fix up ailing infrastructure. Six million dollars for clean water equals failure to learn any lesson from Walkerton.

So this government doesn't seem to understand, doesn't seem to get it, doesn't seem to want to know or to take advice in terms of where it is we need to go. This budget will fail us big time.

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I think the member from Scarborough-Agincourt touched on what's obvious-

ly a very important issue and that is, how do we attract jobs and investment to Ontario? I think he offered some of the answers. I think quality health care is important; I think a quality education system is important; a good quality of life is important. The United Nations, after all, says that Canada is the best place in the world in which to live.

There are a couple of other things that he didn't give as much emphasis to that are equally important. One is a good regulatory framework, and as the members of this House are aware, our Red Tape Commission has been working to give us the best regulatory regime in the world. I think that we are, if you'll pardon the term, competitive with any other jurisdiction in terms of good regulation.

Another thing that he didn't touch on was sound financial policies by the government. We cannot have high-tax and high-spending policies. They just don't work because they lead to big deficits and they lead ultimately to higher taxes again. I think the government has managed over the last six years to get our public finances in order, and that's quite important.

Another issue that he touched on, but I think perhaps he didn't manage to get to the right answer, is the question of taxes. Low taxes create jobs. It's as simple as that. High taxes drive jobs away. I would invite our friends in the opposition, and particularly in the Liberal Party, to perhaps widen their horizons and increase their ambitions for this province. I think what we should think of is what we've had for the last few years: a higher growth rate than that of the United States. I think we should think in terms ultimately of a stronger economy in Ontario than that in the United States. Higher growth means more opportunities, more jobs and a much higher quality of life.

I would hope the Liberals would abandon the old Liberal and NDP policies of tax and spend and do what's right for the people of this province in the 21st century.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** Tax and spend? This is the highest-spending government in the history of Ontario. I listened very carefully to the comments of the member from Scarborough-Agincourt and, government members, there is incentive for us to look at the budget and to get into the budget like my colleague has done. I've heard a lot of criticism about comments from our side of the Legislature, but rarely do I hear criticism about the information that the member from Scarborough-Agincourt brings to this House. It's reasoned thought.

In fact, I would suspect—and this may not be fair, but it's just an assumption on my part—that there are government members who don't get into the budget in detail, who perhaps—and I only suspect this—take the information that's given to them by the Ministry of Finance and because you are government members and because you have faith in that, you then espouse it. But we have an incentive to look into the budget and to ask questions. That's what this place is all about. I think the member from Scarborough-Agincourt does that as well or better than anybody, or most, in this Legislature.

I just want to suggest to the members across, I listened to the 4 o'clock CBC Radio news, and I suggest that you listen to the 6 o'clock news, because your Finance Minister today has conceded that the \$300 million for private support for the likes of—what's the college down the road here?

**Mr Gerretsen:** Upper Canada College.

**Mr Crozier:** Upper Canada College—he admitted today on the radio, may be a low estimate. I think it's starting to come out now, and you should listen to the 6 o'clock news.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** North.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Etobicoke North. I apologize.

**Mr Hastings:** I knew you'd get it right, Speaker.

It's interesting to hear from the finance critic, the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. I'm not sure whether it's muddled thinking; I would hope it isn't. He says that he's very concerned that we're not putting enough money into infrastructure. If you look at the budgets of other years and you look at the amount of money: half a billion from the previous year, into highways in this province. All you have to do is talk to people from northern Ontario as to how far apart and behind—previous regimes had forgotten and neglected highway construction in northern Ontario, let alone in the rest of the province.

Also, the member for Agincourt bemoans the fact that we shouldn't be giving any more money for corporate tax reductions or the capital tax reductions.

**Mr Gerretsen:** He didn't say that.

**Mr Hastings:** He did. He clearly points out that the \$2.5 billion is too much and he wants a rationale as to why that is occurring. Well, we'll give him a rationale. All you have to do is go and talk to some of the small business people who are trying to compete with the US market, or any other market for that point. But in point of fact, there are many US states that are up here on a daily basis trying to lure our companies down to the US with all kinds of incentives. One of the best antidotes, one of the best ways of dealing with that subject, which is not talked about very much in this House, is to have a competitive tax base that will keep our companies here, will hire more people. That is the primary rationale for the reduction in corporate taxation. It's not something to bemoan, it's something to celebrate.

Also, we got down the major debt reduction in the last three—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Phillips:** I just want to respond to the various members. To the last member who spoke, the member for Etobicoke North, the muddled thinking is from the Premier. He said we should be spending at least \$4 billion a year on capital. That's what he said. Now you've got less than \$2 billion. I'm just the messenger. He has the thinking that says we should be spending \$4 billion. I agree with him. But you're spending \$1.9 billion.

Why have we had, by the way, substantial economic growth in the province of Ontario over a considerable period of time? The government says it's because we have a superior work force. We've got enormous talent here. It's because the auto sector has chosen, over the last 20 years, to locate here because of the way we fund our health care system and the quality of the work force.

On the tax front, I am 100% supportive of competitive tax rates. We cannot be out of line with the US. But I don't understand for a moment why the only way we can compete is with 25% lower taxes. I have a lot more confidence in our business community and I believe in what they tell me, and that is, "Listen, if you want us to be successful long-term, you've got to make sure that we have people coming out of our colleges and universities that have had a great educational environment," not starved with \$300 million less than they had five years ago. We need a health care system that continues to be excellent. The first thing Harris did was to cut about 18% out of hospital budgets.

If you want to have a long-term, sustainable economy—by the way, this is fundamental. Anybody can compete by saying, "Listen, I'll have 25% lower corporate taxes," but nobody believes that alone will sustain it. Competitive taxes, investment in the things that matter to long-term economic well-being is what we're all about.

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**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Wayne Wetlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** Don't you just love it, Mr Speaker? Here we have a budget document and the members of the opposition take little pieces of that budget, take it out of context, put their spin on it and make it sound like something altogether different.

I'd like to read just a couple lines here. When the finance minister stood up last week, he said, "Mr Speaker, the budget is balanced for the third year in a row." Shortly thereafter he said, "In the past fiscal year we reduced our debt by the largest amount ever in the history of the province of Ontario—\$3 billion."

I spent four months, between the end of December until we came back here at the end of April, talking to my constituents, finding out what they want, and when I saw that budget I found myself asking, "What do Ontarians want from this government, and are they getting it with the budget document?" I looked at how closely the budget matched up with what I perceived to be the expectations of my constituents who, I feel, are rather representative of Ontarians at large. They want two things. They want stability and they want opportunity, the two cornerstones on which Ontario is based, on which this government is based.

Stability in the eyes and in the minds of Ontarians is jobs—maintenance of existing jobs and creation of new jobs. The creation of new jobs is provided through opportunity, whether it be opportunities for the corporations through tax cuts or an encouragement of consumer spending through personal tax cuts. That consumer

spending increase creates a demand whereby corporations can increase profit, can increase investment and increase jobs.

You'll notice I haven't said that government should provide those jobs. That's the philosophy of the Liberals and the NDP. From the discussions I've had with my constituents, I believe that the role of government is to facilitate the creation of jobs.

Facilitate job creation and job maintenance: did the budget do that? Let's go back, as the Liberal finance critic did, let's go back to 1995. When we came to power in 1995, there was this cycle of spending and taxing that was sapping the energies from the average Ontarian. I remember going door to door during the election campaign in 1995, and I heard from more and more constituents at that time that they encouraged tax cutting because they felt they needed some kind of an increase in their stability, in their confidence, and they felt that the tax decreases would do just that.

Again, in the 1999 election campaign, I found the same thing. I didn't find one constituent in 1999, I didn't find one constituent in the last four months among the hundreds that I spoke to, who said, "Please increase my taxes." I didn't hear that. I didn't hear one of them say, "Increase my taxes so that you can provide better educational opportunities," because they looked at the amount of spending in education by this government in the last five years and they didn't believe what the Liberals and the NDP were saying. They looked at the amount of the spending increase by this government as an investment in health care between 1995 and 1999, which has contributed to a tremendous increase in health care facilities. I might add that the increase in health care spending has continued from 1999 to this budget here.

Do you remember that in 1995 the government was spending \$17.4 billion on health care? Do you remember that in 1995 the Liberals had a red book—it was their election policy, their party platform—and they said in that book that they were going to continue spending at \$17.4 billion? I think you remember that, Speaker.

What are we spending now—\$23.9 billion on health care? That's a tremendous increase—a \$6.5-billion increase in just six years. That's a huge increase. The health care facilities in my riding are far better than they were in 1995. Do you know that the people in my riding had to go to London or Hamilton or Toronto in order to get any kind of cancer or cardiac care? My riding is located in one of the most important economic regions of Canada, and we had insufficient health care. We had a horrible shortage of doctors. We still have a shortage of doctors, but we've made great strides—far greater strides than had ever been even attempted by the NDP or the Liberals.

Our educational facilities have increased dramatically as well. We've increased education spending to \$13.8 billion per year. The Liberals and the NDP tried to say that we have decreased education spending. If you look at the dollars being spent, I don't know how anybody can

say that's a decrease. If you look at each budget, year over year, there's an increase in spending.

The post-secondary system alone is benefiting. We have, of course, as you're aware, an elite post-secondary system in this province. We have world-class universities that can compete with any university in the world. We have technical colleges which are absolutely fabulous. The one in our region, Conestoga College, is so good that recently they had two teams of engineers who beat out the engineers from all the universities that were competing in a contest.

The budget document has announced an additional operating funding grant of \$293 million for colleges and universities. That's good news to them. They're quite pleased with that. We know we have an increase in the number of secondary school students who want to go to university. We know we're going to have a double cohort in the year 2003. We made a commitment to them—to the universities, to the colleges and to the students—that those spaces would be available, and the funding has been provided. The commitment is there. There will be 73,000 new post-secondary spaces to meet that enrolment.

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But not only that; we've added an exciting new component to post-secondary education. It's called the Ontario Institute of Technology and it's going to be located on the campus of Durham College. It will focus attention on the new realities of education. It will focus the attention of a marketplace which demands a strongly combined level of integration of academic and hands-on education and experience. In speaking with John Tibbits of Conestoga College, he felt this was a tremendous move on the part of our government. Not having spoken yet to other executives of post-secondary institutions, I'm still sure that they think this is a very welcome move.

We have a high-tech sector. The Liberal critic talked about the automotive sector, but we have a high-tech sector. Despite the doom and gloom that the media is painting lately, we have a high-tech sector which is creating thousands upon thousands of jobs in this province. The three boom areas in the high-tech sector of course are Ottawa, the Metro Toronto area—Markham is a big area, and Brampton, of course—and the Kitchener-Waterloo region. We have literally thousands of new jobs being created in the high-tech sector in Waterloo region.

Why is this taking place? It's taking place largely because we are providing some corporate tax cuts to encourage investment on the part of these companies, investment into machinery and equipment. This investment right now is taking place at a record pace. Right as I speak, right now, this investment in new machinery and new equipment is taking place at a record pace that provides thousands upon thousands of jobs. That's what corporate income tax reductions are doing.

Let's look at the area of personal income taxes: 95% of Ontarians as a result of this budget will find that their personal income taxes have been reduced at least 20% since 1995; 100% of Ontarians will have had a reduction

in personal income tax, but the vast majority of the money in tax cuts is going to the lower- and middle-income earners. That's not just me, Wayne Wetlaufer, saying so; those are the facts. Some 735,000 low-income earners have been told by our government since 1995, and including this budget, "We don't want your tax money." Ontario is no longer collecting tax money from these people.

Paul Martin—you know him, Liberals; he's the federal Liberal finance minister—said that the best thing we as a country can do is to not collect taxes from the low-income earners. So why don't the Liberals approach the finance minister and say, "Put your money where your mouth is"? Ontario has done it, but the feds haven't. Do the Liberals have the intestinal fortitude to go to Ottawa and ask the federal finance minister to put his money where his mouth is?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Why don't you run federally? All you do is yap about the federal Liberals. Run federally.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** I'm really happy the minister from St Catharines—the member from St Catharines—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Wetlaufer:** A former minister, yes. I'm glad the member from St Catharines has chosen to join us because I can play off him and I'm starting to run out of material.

**Mr Bradley:** There's lots of room in the Alliance.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** Oh no, the Alliance isn't my game; member from St Catharines, you know the Alliance isn't my game.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We would know that the comments need to be addressed through the Speaker. This is not a dialogue; it's a monologue.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm glad you drew my attention to that, but I must come back on topic.

I would like to point out another thing. The Liberal finance critic was talking about the strength of the other world economies. Do you know that since 1995 our economy is the fastest-growing and strongest of any jurisdiction in any of the nations of the G7? What does that bode when we have a slowing economy? Will that still take place? According to the Royal Bank, Ontario is very well positioned in the slowing economy. We are still going to have a very healthy growth rate. What will that growth rate be? It's been projected at 2.3%. Could it be any lower? There is a very remote possibility, but highly unlikely, that it could be ever so slightly lower.

We are still one of the strongest of all the economies in any of the G7 nations. We are told, "Oh, our economy is only so good because of the US economy." If that's the case, then why have we in Ontario outstripped the growth in GDP of the American economy every year for the last six years? They don't want to answer that. The Liberals don't want to answer that; the NDP doesn't want answer that; the critics don't want to answer that. Thank heavens there's not too many of them there. Most financial experts out there like our performance from 1995, they like our performance from 1999, and they like this budget.

I really have to talk about independent schools. Why do we want to provide tax incentives to parents who want to send their children to independent schools?

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton):** Tell us why.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** I'm going to do that, I say to the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton. In 1999 the human rights commission of the United Nations said we should be providing that money. Remember? The Liberals remember because they asked at that time when we were going to respond to this United Nations ruling. OK, so now we've responded.

In Ontario we don't just have a publicly funded education system any more. We have 102,000 children in the province attending 734 culturally or religiously based private schools. These parents want to educate their children with their values, with their language, in their culture. This is very important in a racially, ethnically, religiously diverse province like Ontario. This is very important to these people. We either open our doors to these people and welcome them with open arms or we tell them, "No, we don't want you. We don't want your values." I'm not willing to accept that and the people in my riding are not willing to accept that. We are going to provide them with the ability.

When they pay taxes to fund the publicly funded system and then have to make the ultimate sacrifice, if you will, financially—many of them on low incomes and many of them on lower middle incomes—and pay tuition, we have to give them some break.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

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**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** The people of Ontario must not be fooled by the ads and statistics that are being thrown at us. What each citizen in Ontario should do is ask, "Is my education system better than it was in 1995? Is my health care system better than it was in 1995?"

This budget provides \$100 million less to hospitals when they're already running massive deficits. Rural communities like Belleville and Picton and Quinte West are in dire fear of losing essential services they now have. I was in the emergency ward in one of the hospitals in my community yesterday, where emergency beds are in the hallways with numbers on the wall and patients are being treated in the public setting of a hallway. That wasn't the case five years ago. There has been an absolute deterioration in the system.

Is our education better than it was in 1995? We are seeing school boards forced to close libraries. We're seeing school boards unable to purchase sufficient textbooks. This government is saying, "Why are our students not reading well just because they don't have libraries and textbooks?" Well, duh. It's pretty obvious that as you cut what everyone else would consider to be essential services, there's going to be deterioration.

Lastly, with the mantra of tax cuts, I note with interest that all the municipalities in Ontario are virtually being forced to raise their property taxes. That is an insidious

tax transfer. For low-income people or people on fixed incomes—retirees, for example—traditionally if they paid it in income tax, when their income went down they paid less tax. With property tax, no matter what the income—if they lose their job, if they retire—they are still committed to paying the property taxes, whether they own or whether it's included in the rent. As we see ambulances and social housing foisted on to municipalities, people with reduced incomes are going to be forced to pay more in their retirement years, rather than less.

**Mr Martin:** It's interesting to hear my friend from Kitchener Centre, up on his feet again, all puffed up and so impressed with the initiatives of his own government. Let me tell you what's really going on. This government went ahead with large tax cuts, primarily for corporations and the wealthiest few. This year's budget announcements, once fully rolled out, will total \$4.2 billion. Some \$2.4 billion of that will be in corporate tax cuts. That's not counting the previously scheduled small business tax cuts and beer tax cuts. Most of the government's new spending this year is going to tax cuts, not to health care, to education, to the environment and to our future.

This member bragged a little bit about what they're doing for post-secondary education. The Conservatives have slashed and burned our colleges and universities, to the benefit of their corporate friends. Their goal is privatization and two-tier college and university education—there's no doubt about that. They've announced \$293 million by the year 2003-04, but this year universities and colleges will only get \$30 million. That \$30 million doesn't come close to the \$500 million recommended by the Investing in Students Task Force.

Capital funds have fared even worse. They've been cut by \$154 million. Ontario already ranks 10th among Canada's provinces in operating funding for colleges and universities. Ontario ranks 59th of 61 North American jurisdictions. Today's budget means Ontario is speeding ahead in its race to the bottom. Ontario students are already feeling the squeeze. The Conservatives have increased across-the-board tuition by 60%. For professional and graduate programs, increases are as high as 520%. Student debt has increased with tuition. The average student debt is now \$25,000.

**Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe):** It's interesting to join the debate. I thought we were speaking about the budget. We hear criticism. The one way to stop the criticism is to put yourself in the finance minister's shoes—I know the member from Durham wishes he were the finance minister when he gets up, but we all envision ourselves as finance ministers—and envision what kind of budget you would want to deliver. I know I would want to start with the first line in this budget: "The budget is balanced."

I can hardly wait for the day some other people get the opportunity to say that, because the Liberals never had the opportunity to say that. They pretended it was balanced, and then when they went to the electorate, they actually found there was a \$2-billion deficit. That's the

world they live in. Of course the NDP took it out to a \$12-billion deficit.

If I were the finance minister and looked at this budget, what else could you change? Tax cuts for middle-income earners; \$1.2 billion in additional funding for health care, a priority, something our working families have been calling for; and more tax credits for private and religiously based schools. These are schools that are attended by children of working families.

Where are Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals? They're not quite sure. They take their marching orders from teachers' unions. It'll be interesting how their caucus votes on behalf of working families in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** I'm saddened to have to respond to this budget. I'm saddened as the Ontario Liberal critic for agriculture, because two of the words that were lacking in this budget—I didn't hear them from the member for Kitchener Centre today and I didn't hear them from the Minister of Finance—were the words "agriculture" or "farmer." It's a sad day when the number two industry in this province has seen the neglect and contempt shown to it by this government. This government claims they've added \$40 million to the budget for agriculture, but this is not new money; this is recycled, re-announced, unspent money that has been carried forward from a previous year.

It should have been spent in the previous year investing in the agricultural community in this province, but no, that didn't happen. So it's a numbers game, to try to make it appear there is a commitment to agriculture from this government, but we've certainly seen the lack of commitment to agriculture from this government.

There is another glaring aspect of what is lacking in this budget when it comes to agriculture. We know that the grains and oilseeds industry in this province is going to continue to see record low commodity prices. But there's nothing. I'm extremely disappointed they've failed to allocate any funding for additional emergency grain stabilization payments, or not budgeting for an increase in the market revenue program.

You know there's going to be a crisis faced in the agricultural community in this coming year; it's there. We know we're competing against the subsidies in the United States and against the subsidies in the European Union.

This government has failed to recognize this in looking ahead to the budget of 2001-02. This is strictly unacceptable. This is a government that campaigned in 1995 for no cuts to agriculture. We have seen the budget cut by over 40%. We have seen the emphasis disappear from agriculture and rural affairs. It's a sad day for the agricultural community in Ontario with what this government has done to it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Wetlaufer:** I'd like to thank the members for Prince Edward-Hastings, Sault Ste Marie, London-Fanshawe and Elgin-Middlesex-London for participating in this.

I'm really disappointed in the response from the member for Sault Ste Marie. He read from some spin doctor's opinion, and I'm not used to that member reading a comment. He mentioned that the average student's debt is \$25,000. I think that's high, based on my information, but even if that were accurate, I can remember that in 1995 when my daughter graduated from university—with very good marks, I might add, extremely good marks, and a lot of her class also had extremely good marks. We're talking about A students here. They didn't have a job to go to. They had no opportunity. What was my daughter's debt at the end of four years of university? Do you know, gosh darn it, it was \$20,000, and she didn't have a job. Now they've got jobs, they've got opportunities and they've got good-paying jobs with which to pay off that debt. So he doesn't know wherefrom he speaks.

In our government, tax revenue is up, spending is up. It's interesting to listen to the Liberals. One says that we're not spending enough. During question period they say, "You're not spending enough on this, you're not spending enough on that and you're not spending enough on this." Do you know that in the past week over \$1 billion was spent by those people who are saying we're not spending enough on this, that or the other thing? Yet the member from Essex stood up today—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Order.

On Wednesday, May 9, 2001, Mr Flaherty moved, seconded by Mr Harris, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

On Thursday, May 10, 2001, Mr McGuinty moved that the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on May 9, "That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government," be amended by deleting the words after "That this House" and adding thereto the following:

"Recognizing that this budget fails our families and our future by:

"Introducing private school vouchers which jeopardize the future of public education of Ontario;

"Putting the interests of corporations ahead of the interests of working families;

"And by failing to make strategic investments such as a real cap on class sizes in the early grades, or measures to reduce the doctors' shortage, or a clean drinking water plan;

"This House has lost confidence in this government."

On Wednesday, May 16, 2001, Mr Martin moved that the amendment moved by Mr McGuinty to the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on May 9, "That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government," be amended by deleting the words after "Recognizing that this budget fails our families and our future by" and substituting the following:

"Taking inspiration from the provincial Liberal Party's policy of creating 'more choice' in the school system and by using the code word 'choice' as an excuse to implement a 'voucher' system for private schools—jeopardizing the future of public education in Ontario;

"Recognizing that this budget is driven by the Conservative government's strategic commitment to sell off Ontario through a systematic agenda of privatization, beginning with the privatization of electric power generation—with the support of the provincial Liberals;

"Recognizing that the deregulation of Ontario's Hydro system is a dirty deal that will create chaos in our electricity system and raise electricity prices;

"Recognizing that selling out our public schools system for private vouchers and selling off Hydro and the province's bank is part of a long-running and dangerous competition by the Conservative government to outdo the Ottawa Liberals' tax cuts for the wealthy, putting the interests of corporations ahead of the interests of working families;

"This House has lost confidence in this government."

The first question to be decided is the amendment to the amendment to the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that Mr Martin's amendment to the amendment to the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1754 to 1804.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour of Mr Martin's amendment to the amendment to the motion will please rise one at a time until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes
Bisson, Gilles
Christopherson, David
Churley, Marilyn

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise at a time until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays
Agostino, Dominic
Arnott, Ted
Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby
Bartolucci, Rick
Bountrogianni, Marie
Boyer, Claudette
Bradley, James J.
Bryant, Michael
Caplan, David
Clark, Brad
Clement, Tony
Coburn, Brian
Conway, Sean G.
Crozier, Bruce
Cunningham, Dianne
Di Cocco, Caroline
Duncan, Dwight
Dunlop, Garfield
Ecker, Janet
Elliott, Brenda
Flaherty, Jim
Galt, Doug
Gerretsen, John
Gilchrist, Steve
Gill, Raminder
Hardeman, Ernie
Hastings, John
Hodgson, Chris
Hoy, Pat
Hudak, Tim
Jackson, Cameron
Johns, Helen
Johnson, Bert
Kells, Morley
Kennedy, Gerard
Klees, Frank
Kwinter, Monte
Marland, Margaret
Martinuk, Gerry
Maves, Bart
Mazzilli, Frank
McGuinty, Dalton
McLeod, Lyn
McMeekin, Ted
Miller, Norm
Molinari, Tina R.
Munro, Julia
Murdoch, Bill
Mushinski, Marilyn

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 8; the nays are 74.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

The second question to be decided is the amendment to the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that Mr McGuinty's amendment to the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

All those in favour of Mr McGuinty's amendment to the motion will please stand one at a time until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	Martin, Tony
Bartolucci, Rick	Di Cocco, Caroline	McGuinty, Dalton
Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gerretsen, John	McMeekin, Ted
Boyer, Claudette	Hampton, Howard	Parsons, Ernie
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Bryant, Michael	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, David	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Christopherson, David	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Larkin, Frances	Smitherman, George
Conway, Sean G.	Marchese, Rosario	

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Baird, John R.	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Barrett, Toby	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Snobelen, John
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Tilson, David
Elliott, Brenda	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Flaherty, Jim	Miller, Norm	Tumbull, David
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Gill, Raminder	Murdoch, Bill	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn	Wood, Bob
Hastings, John	Newman, Dan	Young, David
Hodgson, Chris	O'Toole, John	

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 32; the nays are 50.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the amendment to the motion lost.

We now come to the motion of Mr Flaherty that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; this will be a 10-minute bell.

All those in favour will please rise one at a time until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Baird, John R.	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Barrett, Toby	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Snobelen, John
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Tilson, David
Elliott, Brenda	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Flaherty, Jim	Miller, Norm	Tumbull, David
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Gill, Raminder	Murdoch, Bill	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn	Wood, Bob
Hastings, John	Newman, Dan	Young, David
Hodgson, Chris	O'Toole, John	

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	Martin, Tony
Bartolucci, Rick	Di Cocco, Caroline	McGuinty, Dalton
Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gerretsen, John	McMeekin, Ted
Boyer, Claudette	Hampton, Howard	Parsons, Ernie
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Bryant, Michael	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, David	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Christopherson, David	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Larkin, Frances	Smitherman, George
Conway, Sean G.	Marchese, Rosario	

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 50; the nays are 32.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

It being well past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1816.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

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Gilles Bisson, Garfield Dunlop,  
Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy, Frances Lankin,  
Frank Mazzilli, Ted McMeekin, Bill Murdoch  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

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No. 17B

N° 17B

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 16 May 2001**

**Mercredi 16 mai 2001**



**Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr**

**Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr**

**Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers**

**Greffier  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 16 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 16 mai 2001

*The House met at 1845.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PUBLIC SERVICE STATUTE LAW

AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT DES LOIS

EN CE QUI A TRAIT

À LA FONCTION PUBLIQUE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 15, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 25, An Act to amend the Public Service Act and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, 1993 / Projet de loi 25, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la fonction publique et la Loi de 1993 sur la négociation collective des employés de la Couronne.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** It is good to be here this evening and to be sharing a few thoughts on this, yet another bill taking us down a road that is becoming all too familiar to those of us watching the unfolding of the agenda of this government, which is primarily about a couple of things.

One is reducing the involvement of government in the life of the citizens of this province, getting it out of areas where traditionally, over the years, it was deemed by all of us around this place to be the most appropriate approach to offering public services, making sure we were supporting the common effort and the common good of each person who called Ontario home, and making sure those services were provided across the province in every jurisdiction in an equitable and accessible way so that those services weren't so expensive that some people could access them and others couldn't.

It was a style of life, a way of organizing community, a way of serving each other that stands out very obviously as something that serves this province well no matter how you look at it. People around the world trying to get a handle on how they might best set up government and the delivery of public services and meet the needs of their constituents, look to Canada and Ontario as an example of how you do that in a cost-effective and efficient way, in a way that speaks to accessibility and to inclusion, something I think this government needs to take a really close look at.

There are other jurisdictions around the world in this day and age that are doing very well with their economies which have not forgotten that a good economy

always works for all people, always includes all people, and that at the end of the day, by way of the wealth and goods that are generated and created by the contribution of all people, those goods are shared in a way that reflects an understanding of the term "inclusion."

We have before us here this evening, and have had for a short time now, another piece of legislation by this government that will clear the path to walking away from that very valuable and time-proven approach to the delivery of services to the people of this province.

When the government first came to power in 1995, full of the excitement that comes with the kind of election victory they had—nobody, I think, expected them to win in the way they did, not unlike when we came to power in 1990—full of the excitement and energy and enthusiasm and commitment that comes with that kind of victory, they began to move very quickly to make their mark on the common life of this community, began to move in a very aggressive and not very well thought out way to implement their agenda of, yes, tax breaks, primarily for those who make the most money, reducing the involvement and ability of government to serve people across the province—an agenda that began to pick winners and losers.

1850

It's interesting that where the private sector is concerned and where business is concerned, this government is on the record, time and time again, as saying, "Where the market is concerned and business is concerned, we shouldn't be out there, as government, helping, facilitating, supporting, working with businesses," because in their view that was picking winners and losers. We could have a discussion about that on another occasion, perhaps, because I have some real, grave concern about the lack of interest and involvement and understanding by this government re how it could and should be out there giving leadership and acting in partnership and co-operation with communities and organizations and financial institutions and businesses to make sure our economy continues to stay strong no matter what comes at us by way of an upswing or a downswing in the global experience or—most important here in Canada and in Ontario—what happens across the border in the US. But this government chooses—ideologically, I suggest—not to want to be involved or give leadership, because they feel that is picking winners and losers.

From another perspective, they don't mind picking winners and losers. They don't mind pointing to various sectors of our society and saying to them, "You're not living up to your capacity. You're not contributing in the

way you have the potential to contribute." As a matter of fact, in some instances they're saying to some folks, "You're getting in the way of progress." One group, of course, is the poor. One of the things they did very early in their mandate still shocks me to this day: all of us woke up one morning in July, not even a month after the Harris government had been elected to power, to find they were moving to take away 21.6% of the income of the most vulnerable and most at risk of our families. They felt this would somehow stimulate them, encourage them to get out and get work, as if they weren't trying to do that already, as if they weren't doing all in their power to make sure there were enough resources in the home to look after their children as it was, as if, somehow magically, taking the money away from them would make them less a hindrance to progress in that community or across this province.

I think this speaks to the short-sightedness in some of the understanding and approach this government takes to some of these very difficult, challenging, complicated and important considerations that we, the elected, have a responsibility to be very thoughtful and intelligent about. But they found out that when you do that, you create more problems in the long run than you solve. Of course, the statistics and reports and the evidence are beginning to show that their approach to dealing with the poor and the vulnerable in our province is, in fact, creating more poverty and deeper poverty and wider poverty than we've seen in our history.

They realized, then, that they needed to do something different. So instead of coming back here and having a conversation about how we might do that better and differently, how we might pull some people together around the challenge that was presented there and perhaps look at some of the studies that had been done over a number of years around the question of how you better serve the general populace and those in the populace who need special services perhaps more than others, they decided to bring in a private sector corporation, Andersen Consulting. This gets us to where we are today, which is Bill 25, an attempt by this government to put in place further aids to their contracting out more and more of the work that we in this place have a responsibility to oversee and manage and, at the end of the day, be held accountable or responsible for the value of that product as it's rolled out.

The government, in their push to target people, to reduce government, to turn over the operation of this province in many significant ways to the private sector—many of them their friends and benefactors and supporters—found that it wasn't that easy. There were difficulties; there were challenges. There were things that they didn't think out fully. This bill is another example of this government coming back, after the fact, to try to correct or put in place further legislation—actually I would suggest to you, after all we've heard over the last five or six years about red tape—further red tape in some significant and important ways so that they might be able to turn over more and more of the operation of this place

to their friends and benefactors out there in the private sector instead, as I said before, of sitting down with the stakeholders, with those who are going to be most affected by decisions that this government makes and trying to figure out how we might do things more intelligently, yes, more cost-effectively, more efficiently.

It's an ideological, very narrow drive that we see here to turn the operation of government over to the private sector, to target groups of people as being problems so that you can move them out of the way and then get on with the business of making money, I guess, creating wealth and turning that over to a smaller and smaller number of people and providing less and less service through the public sector to communities across the province while more and more allowing businesses to sell services so that they not only get the money that we put into it by way of the public purse to provide the service, but now with a lot of those services, by way of extra billing or fees or licences of various sorts, these corporations can make ever increasingly more money.

As you know, that which drives government, the rationale for government, the motivation for government and the services that government delivers and the motivation for employees who work for government—not always focused on the bottom line and how you can create or generate more profit—is much different than the motivation or the rationale that a private sector entity or enterprise would bring to a particular challenge or business or service delivery model. I think that's why you're beginning to see in this province, as this agenda rolls out, more and more anxiety out there among workers, more and more anxiety in the leadership of communities and in some of the institutions that used to be the beacons of everything efficient and right, such as school boards and the boards of governors of colleges and universities. So this government continues to take us down that road.

#### 1900

This bill will facilitate the privatization of government operations by making it more attractive to the private sector to take over the management of government employees, where they a few years ago in some sectors moved out and turned over, by way of contract, services to the private sector only to realize the hands of those corporations and businesses were tied somewhat by some of the regulation that was still in place, because government at the end of the day will still be or should still be responsible and accountable. They found that it wasn't as easy as they thought it was going to be. The companies that they turned these contracts over to found at the end of the day that it wasn't as lucrative as they thought it was going to be, so they came back and said to the government, "You've got to make some changes. You've got to make it easier. You've got to cut this red tape here and that red tape there so we can deliver these services in a fashion that sees us able to make more money doing it."

Anybody who understands how that works or how that has worked knows there is only one place that these private sector operators can actually at the end of the day

make money, because they still have to buy their goods and services the same as government does in the communities in which they exist, and they still have to pay rent for their facilities and buy vehicles at the same cost as anybody else. The bottom line here is, they want to make their workers work for less and thereby generate more in the bottom line of the company they serve.

This isn't about serving people. This isn't about improving services to people. The example I used a few minutes ago of turning the delivery of social services over to the multinational corporation, Andersen Consulting, now morphing into Accenture, is a perfect one of that, where a body of people elected from across this province, from different political persuasions, from different parts of the province, is gathered here to act as the conscience of the community of Ontario to deliver programs. There probably isn't anything we do that is more important or fundamental to the development of a caring, civil and intelligent society than how we look after those who are most vulnerable and most at risk.

So what do we in this place? Because there was a fear on that side that those of us on this side who are often labelled as bleeding hearts might have too much influence in terms of how we deliver those programs, we might bring—

**Mr Wayne Wetlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** You're not a bleeding heart.

**Mr Martin:** Yes, I am a bleeding heart, Wayne, and I'm proud of it.

If we have too much say in how those programs should be delivered, it might cost government a little bit more. It might not be in keeping with the downsizing of government that these folks feel is necessary for the economy to boom the way they expect it will—"Then we'll just take it right out of there altogether and we'll turn it over to Andersen Consulting and they'll do a good job."

You should have understood from the beginning, and maybe you did but you weren't saying anything, that what we're beginning to realize out there is that Andersen Consulting, as will be most of the private sector operations that will take over because of the introduction and passing of this bill, won't be about improving services; they won't be about making sure the services we deliver as a community of people on behalf of our constituents are the best they can be. They'll be about making sure they're, yes, efficient and delivered in a way that smacks of getting the most you possibly can, never mind the health and safety concerns, out of your employees. But more than anything they'll be about, "How do we make some money out of this?"

The contract this government has with Andersen Consulting is about Andersen Consulting getting a percentage of every dollar they are able to claw out of the hands of the families and children who are among the most vulnerable and most at risk in our communities today, and that, I dare say, will eventually come back to haunt all of us.

It's a huge mistake. I suggest, by passing this Bill 25 and making it ever more easy for this government to move on its agenda of turning the operation of government and the delivery of government services over to the private sector; in fact we will wear the results and it won't be a happy day.

That's one part of this bill. There are a couple of other parts we could spend 20 minutes on: the one where this government is giving thanks to the Ontario Provincial Police Association for having supported them in the last election by making it easier for them to move in and take over some of the support workers in OPP offices across this province, giving them the right, legislatively, to raid a brother or sister union so that they can collect at the end of the day, it says here, over \$1 million in union dues.

You guys are interesting. On the one hand you criticize us for working in tandem and in partnership with organized labour and taking money from them to help us run our campaigns, working in this place to make sure they are allowed to do that which they do best, which is organize workers so they can make a decent wage, have benefits and pensions and have safe workplaces, and then bring that forward and make it the order of the day for every workplace across this province by way of labour and employment legislation. And yet, here they are themselves with their own particular friendly, hand-picked unions, most of them in the policing industry, saying to them, "Thank you very much for your support during the last provincial election. Here's a little gift. You can go out now, once we've passed Bill 25, and virtually, without any concern or worry about legislation, raid another union's members and thereby collect over \$1 million."

I say this bill, given that it facilitates the agenda of this government, will not in the long run serve any of us very well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments and questions.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I was interested in the presentation made by the member for Sault Ste Marie. He was, as usual, talking about the push of our government to reduce the size of government and move a lot of that out into the private sector. I stand for that. I'm very proud of the fact that we are doing quite a bit of that.

He talks about running into difficulties and challenges. Whenever you make challenges, there is no question that there are difficulties in challenges. I can tell you, if we waited until it was perfect, it probably wouldn't happen. That's what a lot of governments do. They sit there, they wait and wait, they jig and rework and then finally they roll it out and, lo and behold, it's probably not perfect then either.

Some of our philosophy is, if it could be 90%, 95% or 98% right, then let's get it out there and we can fine-tune it later on. Lo and behold, an awful lot of things we rolled out worked very well. Yes, some had to be fine-tuned, there's no question, but at least we had the intestinal fortitude to try a lot of things and get them out there.

I hear from the member for Sault Ste Marie that he is really concerned about those corporations, that they might make a profit and how terrible that might be. It's going to cost as much as it did before, with the civil service doing it, and then there's going to be a profit added on. That isn't exactly the way it works. It's been proven in many other jurisdictions, and we're finding that very true here.

I think of the maintenance of highways. Yes, that first year or so there were a few hiccups, but I look at the maintenance of the 401 in my area and it's working extremely well, particularly in this past winter with the weather being pretty rough.

He also commented that this bill is not about improving services to people. That's what this bill is all about: to give flexibility so it can be innovative to our civil service, so that in fact we can improve customer service. Their hands have been tied in the past. They won't be in the future.

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):** I'd like to congratulate the member for Sault Ste Marie for his very thoughtful debate on this bill. Actually, I'd like to acknowledge the temperament change of the member for Northumberland: much more reasoned debate on bills as compared to the past. I hope that doesn't change.

I'd like to pick up on one of his phrases, that you had the "intestinal fortitude." I'd like to refer to explanatory note 3 and point out an inconsistency.

"Proposed subsection 22(4.1) of the act clarifies that the giving of reasonable notice or compensation in lieu of reasonable notice is not a precondition to be met before a public servant can be released,"—and here's the important part—"and that a public servant who has been released shall not be reinstated."

The inconsistency is this: a public sector CEO who is let go receives a great, big, huge severance and can be reinstated within the public sector within the province of Ontario. About a year ago I introduced a bill, the severance bill, which was passed unanimously by all three parties and which died because this Legislature was delayed by this government, by this Premier, which would have stopped those golden handshakes.

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Earlier today I introduced a simpler bill which would just publish the severance packages of public sector CEOs. What's good for the goose should be good for the gander. If public servants who are unionized are treated this way, public sector CEOs should also be accountable. Again, using the member for Northumberland's words, I hope the government has the intestinal fortitude to actually take the bill, make it their own and pass it quickly so we don't have these golden handshakes across the province where CEOs mess up, are given hundreds of thousands of dollars to leave quietly and we, the public, don't even have the right to pick up the phone and ask how much their severance package was.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I agree with the premise of the member for Sault Ste Marie that

the government brings this bill as another mechanism to get to the rush of privatization, to figure out how to privatize everything that moves.

I want to bring to light one experience we know of this government since 1995 where they have privatized and bring to the record what has happened. In 1995-96 the government said, "We are going to move to privatize highway maintenance across Ontario." There used to be a system that said that 50% of the work that was being done to maintain our highways across the province was done by MTO employees, and 50% was contracted out to the private sector to supplement the work of the MTO. That way, you had the best of both worlds. We, as a government, thought that was a very reasoned way to do things.

In 1995-96 the government said, "We're going to move to privatization." When they moved to privatize, the Minister of Finance of the day, Ernie Eves, and the then-Minister of Transportation, Mr Turnbull, said, "We are not going to do this and we will reverse privatization if we can't save at least 2% for the taxpayers of Ontario." Here we are, fully six years after the fact, paying more for highway maintenance than ever before, not because there's more snow, not because the government has put more plows out, but because we're getting bigger bills from the private sector.

The worst part is, we're not even getting better service. We are now having closures of highways I can speak of across northern Ontario where we never used to have them before. Highway 11 from Hearst down to the Kapuskasing-Timmins area is very seldom closed in the winter. I don't remember it closing in the period of at least 10 years during the time I was driving. But under the privatization model, those highways are closed on a regular basis in the winter. Why? Because the private sector can't do it well. So we're not saving money and we're not getting better service. It's strictly ideological.

**Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe):** I hope Brian Adkin and Jim Drennan from the Ontario Provincial Police Association are watching tonight. This is an issue on which the opposition has been talking around the bush and not addressing. What this is about is choice. Presently OPSEU members employed by the Ontario Provincial Police who are civilians want to become members of the Ontario Provincial Police Association. They feel they are better represented by that association than by OPSEU. These are the working families, some of the men and women who work in the radio rooms as dispatchers, some who work in garages.

The member for Elgin-Middlesex-London has the Ontario Police College in his riding. As he knows, several hundred employees who work at the police college, the vast majority I've heard from, also want to leave the umbrella of OPSEU and be represented by the Ontario Provincial Police Association. Presently they are not allowed to do that. So you have police personnel everywhere else in the province, whether it's London, Toronto or Hamilton, represented by their associations, their associations in turn represent their civilian mem-

bers, and guess who's not allowed to do that because of the OPSEU agreement? The province of Ontario. The OPPA cannot do that. They cannot represent their civilian members, and that is wrong. Those civilian members certainly have something in common with the people they work with.

And no more double-talk. I asked Brian to watch how the opposition votes on this, especially the rural areas. St Thomas has the St Thomas police department. Right across the street is the Ontario Provincial Police, which polices outside St Thomas. Those civilian members can't be represented by the OPPA. That's wrong, and I've asked Brian Adkin and his membership to follow this vote.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Sault Ste Marie has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Martin:** I want to thank the member for Northumberland—indeed his tone was different tonight—and the members for Hamilton Mountain, Timmins-James Bay and London-Fanshawe. I was actually disappointed the member for Kitchener Centre didn't get up. I thought he was here to listen and maybe have a little dialogue back and forth, like old times, you know? But no. I guess what we've got to do here is get him wound up a bit.

The member for Timmins-James Bay presents a perfect example. The government privatizes the maintenance of highways and at the end of the day finds out that it's costing them more, and I guess it isn't quite as lucrative for the private sector, the corporations, because they keep billing the government more. So what do they do? Instead of sitting down with that group of businesses and saying, "We've got to work this out and negotiate and find a way to make this work," or in fact admitting that they made a mistake and going back to doing it the way that they used to do—because so far it's contracting that they're doing—no, they're going to bring in a piece of legislation to fix what they've done already. Like knee-jerk—"We'll make it illegal for such and such to happen."

It's not unlike what's happening in the hospital sector. They downsized, cut back on the budget, forced those hospitals in many instances to turn pieces of their operation over to the private sector, but they're still not able to make it as cost-effective and efficient as they'd like it to be, as they'd like to force people into doing. So what are they going to do? They're going to bring in a piece of legislation and they're going to make it illegal for hospitals to run deficits. That'll fix it. That'll fix it in a hurry. You'll have a whole bunch of hospitals out there either breaking the law or not offering the services—

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr Galt:** I appreciate the opportunity to be able to speak on Bill 25 and, by the way, I'll be sharing my time with the member for London-Fanshawe. He'll be covering about the last five minutes of my presentation.

Here's a bill originally brought in some 122 years ago; there have been no changes for 40-some years. By the way, Mr Speaker, I just reflect back on some of the comments that were made a few minutes ago when we were

having some of the two-minute hits. There was a nasty insult tossed across the House at me, and I thought you would have interfered, when a member for Hamilton Mountain, a Liberal, actually complimented me. I consider that as quite an insult to be coming from the opposition. It's obvious that I'm doing something wrong, so we're not going to allow that to happen in the future. Maybe she'll withdraw it, I don't know.

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A 122-year-old act and no changes in the last 40 years—certainly it's about time there were some changes made. I look back to some of the quotes that came from the 1993 study that the NDP commissioned, and you know this flies right in the face of what the previous member was saying. Here's one excerpt from a public servant that said, "We sometimes take a long time to get it wrong." Boy, better turn things around, but you didn't. "Overall the Ontario Public Service does not perceive that it is getting good value for tax dollars." This is right from the inside. "Give us some results and value for our tax money. We can't afford you!" That's a member of the public. Only one in five respondents thought they were getting efficiency from the Ontario government.

From Bob Rae: "Fewer than four in 10 Ontarians agree that the services provided by the Ontario government are of value to the taxpayers' money." He goes on to say, "In business you know that customers matter because if you don't pay attention to customers they go elsewhere." Well, when you have a monopoly like government where else can they go?

Then the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan commented in 1996: "Everyone agrees that we need a more efficient and smaller public service."

The member for St Catharines commented that, "Government could be more efficient by providing services during times that are more convenient to the public and not the other way around." That's a lot of what this bill is about.

Just to put this into context—

**Mr Martin:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member for Northumberland is making a great speech here tonight and I thought there should at least be quorum to hear him, don't you think? Is there quorum?

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you like me to check and see?

**Mr Martin:** Please.

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** Quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Northumberland.

**Mr Galt:** I appreciate your making sure there's a quorum here to hear my presentation.

Some of the amendments in this Public Service Act are really about looking at the evolving market and the evolving industry that we have here in Ontario and how the services should be properly delivered. So much of it relates to changing customer needs, even though the

member from Sault Ste Marie pointed out differently, which I really have to disagree with.

So much of this has to do with customer service. As I look at the kind of customer service that's been going on in Ontario, the changes in the last decade, we now have 24-hour shopping in many stores, stores that are open seven days a week. You can remember a few years ago when the only time we could go to the bank or get any banking services was from 10 in the morning till 3 in the afternoon and then, lo and behold, they even went to 6 o'clock on Fridays. That has totally changed with Internet banking, with the ATMs that are available and telephone banking. It can be done 24 hours day. You can get your money out of an ATM. They've been doing that for some time. It was very obvious to me and obvious to those in the government that something had to be done.

We talked a lot about red tape when we first came to office, but a lot of what people think of in terms of red tape has to do with customer service. Lo and behold, our government has responded in many ways to that customer service, and with the change in this bill it's going to be much easier in the future, as we have brought in things—one of the most recent things we brought in were early years centres recently announced by the minister responsible for children. That's really about one-stop shopping for those parents who want to find out what kinds of services are available to them as parents. In many communities, there will be 25 different organizations that help and work with you, and here, with an early years centre, it will be a common place where parents can go to find out what kind of services are available.

We also brought in, shortly after we took office, the one-window approach to planning and development. Prior to the 1995 election, I often heard a developer say that they would be trying to develop a subdivision not for themselves but for their children or even for their grandchildren, that it took that long to get a plan approved and in place, and with that one-window approach, with it all going through municipal affairs rather than having to send to 16 or 17 other ministries to get approval, it was all done through one particular window, being the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

More recently, we brought in common counters. I believe there are some 50 of those across Ontario. This is where a person can go and find out what is available from the Ontario government. With many of the consultations that were going on—by the way, that's indeed a hallmark of our government, extensive consultations, going out and hearing from the public—one of the things we were hearing was that they couldn't sort out where these services were available. One way can be through these common counters. They either have it there in sheet form or they can print it off the Internet, but it's certainly a big boost to people who want to know what's available from the Ontario government.

We also have the kiosks where you can go and register a business. I think many people will recall not too many years ago where, to register a business, it took weeks and weeks. You had to send in names and you had to send in

various proposals to various government departments. Now it can be done in 20 or 30 minutes—certainly within an hour. That is indeed a big turnaround in registering a business.

We've also brought in kiosks where you can renew your auto licence plates or you can renew your drivers' licences. That can be done 24 hours a day. Whenever you can get to the kiosk, you can have that upgraded. That sort of parallels the ATMs which we're all so familiar with, where you can go and get cash at any time—of course provided you have some cash in the bank to start with.

It's very important that we review and that we investigate new ways of doing things. We heard the criticism from the member for Sault Ste Marie about the private sector, and moving out and having them do more of the government activities. Governments around the world, at least in the developed world, are looking to partnerships, knowing that it can't all be done by government alone, partnering with various organizations.

Certainly the private sector is one that we need to be more and more involved with, and it's only through this kind of legislation that that is going to work smoothly. As we read the book Reinventing Government, the slogan in there is, "Government is here to steer, it's not here to row." In the past we've been doing, as government, an awful lot of rowing rather than steering, and it's time we got to the business of government rather than trying to do everything out there for them.

This bill is about efficiency, effectiveness and reliability, really a cornerstone of the public service, and it should be. I'm sure, with this bill in place, it's going to be into the future. There is no question that families and industry are looking for more for less. Why should government be so different? Looking for more for less: I know we've heard it often, but it's so important that we look at those kinds of efficiencies.

We hear especially the opposition talking so much about the government money, like it's our money to be spent or not to be spent. The government has no money. It isn't the government's money; it's the taxpayers' money—the 11 million people here in Ontario, hard-working Ontarians. It's their money; it's not the government's money. Yes, we oversee some, but it's definitely not our money.

This bill, if approved, will help to attract and retain the quality of staff that we really need in Ontario. For way too long we've overlooked and not really recognized the people in the areas of hi-tech, scientists, those with specialized skills. The only way they could be recognized in their salaries was to give them an administrative role. A lot of scientists really do not want to have an administrative role. They would rather do their scientific thing and not be involved with administration—do what they do best—and with this bill, that will certainly be possible.

This bill is also about accountability, a 120-plus-year-old bill, 40 years with no changes. It's about time we did something and brought accountability in. Certainly, by bringing in the flexibility to reduce waste, reduce in-

efficiency, the delegating of authority is part of this bill. Let me stress that this is not delegation of responsibility. There is a significant difference. It's about accommodating some cross-functional activity of various ministries so that it's not all working in the single silo.

We've heard so much about these silos and not talking to each other. It's about activities of the public-private partnerships. Right now that's next to impossible. It's about having deputy ministers who are able to delegate that authority, whether there's private sector involvement or working with other ministries.

It's about allowing and encouraging innovative and creative solutions so that we will have those efficiencies. Taxpayers indeed want results. They don't want a whole lot of explanation about some bureaucratic hurdles as to why they can't get something. They want results.

That's been a hallmark of our government, as we look at things like three years in a row where the budget has been balanced; this year, paying off \$3 billion on that debt. It's about meeting the target in five years of having 725,000 net new jobs and being well over 100,000—heading for the 800,000 that we committed to in the next five years. That's about results and that's what the taxpayers of the Ontario have been looking for.

When we talk about accountability, just have a look for a moment at something like education, the accountability we've brought in there: student testing, teacher testing, a common curriculum, a standardized report card; looking at the Red Tape Commission; with health care—hospital report cards, bringing in triage and going after the federal government, which started out 50-50 with health care funding, deteriorating to some 7%. We've got them up around 11% to 12%. There's a long way to go. Holding the feds' feet to the fire to get some dollars from them for the grain and oilseed producers in Ontario—they were not very fair with them at all.

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Then we talk about accountability, about when the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale brought in the Executive Council Amendment Act, 2001, Bill 21. Lo and behold, it was about attendance, and 30% of the Liberal Party wasn't here to vote. I think that is absolutely deplorable, and this is a bill on accountability. But accountability is about a consistent message. I know that the Liberals just don't understand what a consistent message is. When you have a leader who says first he's for and then against hospital closures, when you have a leader who's first for and then against reopening hospitals, when you have a leader who's been against and then for additional health care funding, when you have a leader who's been for and then against raising taxes, that's not accountability. That's absolutely deplorable. Then, just to tell you about trade missions, he was talking about, "Mike Harris isn't criss-crossing the planet," and then he talks about, "Mike Harris is going to champion this province abroad," and then he talks about, "I just don't think that is the most efficient way for us to hustle business." This is the inconsistency we've been hearing from the Liberal Party of this province.

I just want to wind up in a few minutes, to summarize before I turn the Legislature over to the member for London-Fanshawe. This bill is about greater flexibility and administrative efficiency. It's about the opportunity for more democracy in the workplace, particularly with the OPP and the civilian employees. It will help to clarify the political activity rights of those members, and also those restrictions, so they understand, and it's well laid out for them.

It's also about clarifying the government's intention regarding the collection, use and disclosure of information as it relates to the delivery of human resources services.

### *Applause.*

**Mr Galt:** And when I get a round of applause from the Liberals I'm quite upset, because I know I've been insulted once again. But I would now like to turn the floor over to the member for London-Fanshawe, and I look forward to their enthusiastic response, that they will in fact be supporting this bill.

**Mr Mazzilli:** Bill 25, An Act to amend the Public Service Act: I'm very passionate about this because it's about representation. As I said earlier, I hope that Brian Adkin, Jim Drennan and the rest of the Ontario Provincial Police Association are watching, and watching closely.

At least the member for Sault Ste Marie has been consistent, as has been the NDP. They support OPSEU and OPSEU supports them, and they will not do anything for OPSEU to lose any members. They have a consistent view here. But I believe this is about representation. The employees who actually are represented under the umbrella of OPSEU who work for police agencies, provincial police agencies, these members have no choice as to whom they're represented by. It has to be OPSEU. We've heard from those members, and these are dispatchers, some may be garage personnel, Ontario Police College employees in Aylmer, and they don't have that choice.

I heard from police members last time there was a civil service strike: they did not want to be on strike. But you know what? They didn't have any choice. That's what I heard. I asked Brian Adkin and Jim Drennan to watch the vote closely, because in my riding this doesn't affect me. I will be voting for this simply based on what I believe is the will of the people who work for those agencies. Rural ridings, and I asked Brian to watch this, are generally policed by the Ontario Provincial Police. Their civilian members are whom you are voting against here. You're saying, "No, you don't have the choice of being represented by the Ontario Provincial Police Association. You have to take OPSEU."

Now at least our friend from Sault Ste Marie—they've been consistent with that view and I applaud them for sticking to that. However, I look forward to seeing how Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals vote on this issue, because they have many rural members. I don't know if they have thought of the impact of this.

Elgin-Middlesex-London, outside of St Thomas, rural, mostly policed by the Ontario Provincial Police and the

civilian members represented by OPSEU. Those same civilian members have lobbied me; they've lobbied the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London. Those same members that work at the Ontario Police College have lobbied me, have lobbied the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London. So I ask that this vote be watched closely. No fuzzy words about, "Well, we're voting against it because there's something else."

You know, that's what we get from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals on every issue. Tax credit for religious schools: "Well, we're going to vote on it because maybe we don't believe in it. Maybe we don't believe in it, but we kind of do." But our friend from Sault Ste Marie is very clear. They support only public education and nothing else—very clear.

I asked Brian Adkin and his membership to watch Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals on this issue and not accept, "Oh, there's some fine print that we don't like." If they vote against this, what they're saying is every civilian member of the Ontario Provincial Police does not have a choice of being represented in the workplace by an organization that they feel better represents them. That's what this is about.

When you look at the position of the members from the Ontario Police College, what you have there is civilian instructors who are represented by OPSEU teaching police cadets who are actually represented by police associations. So the instructors at the college don't even have the same right to be represented by a police association. They have to take this simply because of an amendment to the Public Services Act.

Mike Harris and our party support choice and we support choice for those employees.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** I'm very pleased to have a moment to respond in particular to the Tory members who would dare to bring forward Bill 25 and then suggest that Brian Adkin and all of the OPPA should watch us closely. Brian Adkin from the OPPA watches us closely every day and in particular has watched the Conservative government and what they've done in terms of public service since the day they took office in 1995. Brian Adkin has more political instinct in his baby finger than this member will find in his entire being.

The point is, if you choose to put one hostage in a bill—this bill is about privatization of the public service. Let's not make any bones about what this bill is about. You want to cushion it around with the OPP and make it another police issue that you can go vaunting around Ontario. Fine. People like Brian Adkin and the OPP know exactly what this bill is about. It is about contracting out government services, reliable government services and civil service workers in Ontario who have been reliable, whom we have been able to count on. That is what this bill allows this government to do. Let's call it by what it really is.

To suggest accountability by this government—it is a farce to call this government accountable by any stretch.

You expect it of the broader public service; I expect it of the Ontario government and that means that the Premier can be in this House to answer questions himself. That's why today I asked that our own Premier of Ontario put an electronic monitoring device on his ankle so we know his whereabouts, and include a zapper on it so as the clock approaches 1:30, right around question period time, we can have the Premier of Ontario sitting right here in the House and say, "Zap, time to answer the questions," because that's what the public of Ontario is demanding.

Brian Adkin and the OPPA know Ontario Liberals have been supportive from day one, so let's not for a moment believe that Bill 25 or anything else from this government, is going to purport to be supportive of the public service. That is a joke.

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**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. The chair recognizes the member for Sault Ste Marie.

**Mr Martin:** I want to comment on some of the remarks made by the members for Northumberland and London-Fanshawe. The member for Northumberland seems to think that we on this side of the House don't understand the private sector or private enterprise. Many of us were in business before we came to this place, so we understand it. But we also understand there are some things that make sense to be delivered by the private sector; there are other things that don't: the delivery of government services to people. The spending of the money that is collected from all of us should not be put into a system where there's a bottom line and a for-profit piece of that action. Any money we collect from each other by way of taxes should be spent, every penny of it, on the delivery of services that we can all access.

There's lots of things, there's a whole whack of things out there that the private sector is very good at, as a matter of fact better than anybody else at delivering. They're in that sector and they should do that. God bless them if they make money, and lots of it, because as you know and as I've said, it contributes to the economy of that region. But don't deliver services, particularly services that affect those who are most in need, the vulnerable and sick out there, by using a private sector model where there's a for-profit incentive there for that company.

I want to talk to the member for London-Fanshawe and tell him that in terms of this OPP move of their support services, there is in fact in place under the Labour Relations Act now a facility for that to happen. It's a little bit more difficult than what this legislation will allow to happen, but then that shouldn't surprise any of us. This government thinks it can fix everything by the stroke of a pen, by bringing in legislation and just decreeing that something is illegal or whatever. There is in place a process that unions can use if they're not happy with their representation.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** I find it hard to believe the two opposition parties were briefed on this bill, because they certainly don't understand it.

I can remember back about eight or nine years ago when the taxpayers of this province were all upset about

the efficiencies of government. This applied to both the Liberals and the NDP when they were in power. Then in 1992, Bob Rae—you'll remember him, Tony, the NDP Premier—was quoted by the *Globe and Mail*, October 11, 1992, as saying, "Fewer than four in 10 Ontarians agree that the services provided by the Ontario government are of value to the taxpayers' money." He understood a little bit about business because he also said in that same article, "In business, you know that customers matter, because if you don't pay attention to customers they go elsewhere."

Then subsequently, April 11, 1996, in a Liberal Party news release, Lyn McLeod—I say to the member from Windsor West, you know her; she sits right near you—said, "Everyone agrees that we need a more efficient and smaller public service."

What we're doing here is trying to establish efficiency and better service. How do you get better service if you do not have the technical expertise? We want to be able to have the flexibility to go out and hire the expertise for a term-limited job; job specific. That could mean up to a three-year period before renewal. There's no problem with that, because what that will do is free up the civil servant's time to spend on what he or she needs to do, and we'll have the expertise of this external source.

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** I'd like to take this couple of minutes to respond to some of the comments from members on the government side. Let me tell them that we on this side of the House understand very clearly exactly the intent and meaning the government has put in Bill 25, and it's not a walk on the beach for our public employees. Let me tell them that.

When the public employees read between the lines of Bill 25, they will cringe when they read privatization. Let me say to the members on the government side that we don't have to go to the private sector to get those temporary experts. We put them into the schools, we educate them and then, because of their own faults, we lose them to the private sector and to the United States. I really don't call that good politics on behalf of our people in Ontario.

Let me say that when they speak of choice they do not give choice a chance. They don't. I wonder how they explain to their constituents when a deal, a decision or a policy is changed time and time over behind closed doors. I can't explain to my people and neither can they, because of what this bill does. It's not so innocuous as they say. It falls to the Premier, to the minister, to the deputy and any other person they want to appoint to make a decision on behalf of the taxpayers of Ontario, without coming to this House for a say. We don't have a say when they make a decision. I do not call that democratic or being accountable, and I think the people of Ontario will remember that. I think the public employees of Ontario demand and deserve true respect from their own government. They won't get it through Bill 25.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Northumberland has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Galt:** Certainly the member from Kitchener Centre had some absolutely brilliant observations. He just whispered to me that he'd missed the most important part and that was to compliment me on such a great speech that I had presented.

The member for Windsor West's comments about privatization and the public service and the accountability of the Premier: I wonder what she thinks. Should the Premier be over there helping Ontario get the Olympics or not? She seems to be jealous that maybe he's out there doing a good job and just may win the Olympics for the city of Toronto and for the province of Ontario.

Just let me relate to you the inconsistencies that party has. This is about travel and it's about what she was referring to: "I'm really surprised that Mike Harris isn't criss-crossing the planet telling people what we've got going for us here." That was in the *Sault Star* on August 13, 1996.

But then, "But what I mean is when is Mike Harris going to champion this province abroad?" That was McGuinty, Fourth Reading, December 18, 1997. On Talk 640 the host said, "But really, should Ontario be chasing down trade with China?" What did McGuinty say? "I just don't think that is the most efficient way for us to hustle business." Which side is it that they're on? This is something like the deputy leader here coming across that the Premier should always be in the House. The deputy leader doesn't seem to understand his productivity in getting things accomplished for this province of Ontario.

I was thrilled—absolutely thrilled—to hear the member from Sault Ste Marie actually say it does make some sense that some aspects are in the private sector. I didn't think he wanted anything out in the private sector. I thought he always wanted every service in the province of Ontario to be run by the government. It's kind of refreshing to hear that he actually believes that something should be in the private sector. It's refreshing to hear those comments come from that member.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Sergio:** I'd like to add some comments on Bill 25.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** Tell them you want to share your time with him and I'll go get him.

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**Mr Sergio:** Yes, I'd like to share my time with Mr Peters.

Let me say that this bill is not as innocuous as we think it is, for a number of reasons. There are a number of good reasons why I think we have to let the public in general and our public employees know of the content of the bill and the intent of the government on Bill 25.

There is still a very vivid memory of Bill 26, and this is one of those branches that is springing out from that infamous, ominous Bill 26. Really, what is the intent of Bill 25? It is not, as the member from Northumberland was saying, that this is for trans-functional accommodation of issues between various departments or various ministries. No. Indeed, this very short and seemingly innocuous bill does a lot more than that. What it does is allocate power further than where it is already, that is, in

the hands of the Premier and his staff and the hands of the various ministers, deputy ministers, the big bureaucrats who are telling the government what to do, where to go and in what direction. It is a fact that when decisions are made behind closed doors on such important issues as public servants, and we don't have a say in this House, and policies come out from the government unknown to the employees and unknown to us, I believe this is not the way we should be dealing with this particular issue.

It's very serious when anyone who has been given power by the Premier or one of the ministers or someone else below them makes a decision with respect to hiring, firing, putting together or dismantling. There is one area in here which deals with privacy of individual rights. I wonder how we deal through that particular ministry or tribunal when personal information is not kept so personal and private.

These are just a very few of the issues that I would like to touch with respect to Bill 25. I have here my colleague who I think wants to delve much deeper into the content of Bill 25. But let me say that privatization is something the public employees in Ontario are watching very carefully, and they don't like it. I will stop at that and I will allow my colleague to continue on Bill 25.

**Mr Peters:** I want to thank my colleague for filling in for me. My time came up a little sooner than I had expected.

I think the most important thing we need to recognize in this piece of legislation that's here in front of us this evening, and what I think the citizens of Ontario need to recognize, is that the intent within this piece of legislation is to make it easier for this government to contract out other parts of the public service to the private sector. I think we've witnessed first-hand the effect of the privatization agenda of this government. We've seen the drastic effects it's having on service within this province. I think it's a sad day that this agenda of privatization that has been put forward by this government is continuing today.

There are a number of issues within this bill that I think are very detrimental to public safety and to environmental issues in this province. We've witnessed first-hand the effects of privatization, particularly in the area of the environment. We've seen first-hand what's happened around this province with the drastic cuts that have been experienced, particularly by the Ministry of the Environment, and the contracting out of services and the privatization of services—and the reliance on services that had been traditionally looked after and traditionally provided by government employees, that these services are being contracted out to the private sector.

One of the issues that we need to deal with this evening is one aspect of this bill, which is the term classified and the three-year term unclassified categories. We're very concerned, and I think all citizens of Ontario should be concerned, because we're extremely proud of the work the public service has done in this province and the work they've done on behalf of Ontario citizens, work they've done paid for by our tax dollars, work that we know they have done with the professionalism they bring

to the job. We're extremely concerned that that professionalism Ontario citizens have come to enjoy over the years is going to be lost as a result of changes that are proposed in this piece of legislation. We know the reliability and professionalism that public servants bring to the job. We know too, though, that when you privatize those services, that professionalism and reliability cease to exist.

We also know that public servants who don't have the security of working, who don't have that job security, are going to be reluctant to speak out against improper government activities, because if you're working on a three-year contract and you're hoping that contract is going to be renewed and you see something that isn't right in the delivery of a public service or in dealing with the public, you're going to be reluctant to speak out in that regard. You're going to be concerned that if you do speak out, that is going to affect the renewal of your contract. I don't think that's an atmosphere we want employees to be working in.

We've seen what has happened as we've seen services privatized. We've seen what has happened in Walkerton. It's a tragic circumstance that happened there, where seven people lost their lives. It's a sad day that we have to deal with that. We're hearing at first hand, on a daily basis as the Walkerton inquiry unfolds, the results of privatization of government services and cutbacks to the public service in this province. That's very sad.

Another aspect of this bill that is of extreme concern is that it allows the deputy minister to delegate his or her powers to hire, fire, promote, transfer or discipline to another deputy minister in any other ministry designated as the private sector person. Again, this is an erosion of the public service in this province.

I've heard references made that this is an antiquated bill and a piece of legislation that needs to be changed. One thing we need to recognize that this government fails to recognize is that the services our public servants have provided over the years since this province was created in 1867 have been services that—they know they're government employees; they know their salaries are paid from provincial taxes. Those are employees who have taken pride in their work, employees who have known that the work they do benefits the 12 million citizens in this province. But what we've seen time and time again since this government was elected in 1995 has been this constant attack on and erosion and demoralization of the public service in this province. That's extremely sad.

I think taxpayers want value for their money, but they also want something more than value for their money. They want to know the employee is committed to the job. They want to know that employee is there and is going to look out for their best interests. Those are guarantees we have right now as a result of having a good public service, but those are guarantees that are going to erode and disappear because of the intent, the privatization attitude of this government. I think that's very sad.

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We've seen what has happened. I want to talk a little bit about some of the effects of privatization and the

direction in which this government is going in that regard. I want to talk in particular about the corrections ministry. That is something that could very well be affected by this, because what this will allow is further privatization of the public service, where the deputy minister could delegate his or her authority for jails, environmental protection and public safety issues to a private company whose only interest is profit.

We've witnessed that already with the decision to privatize the new facility in Penetanguishene. What concerns me is that the seed that has been planted there is a dangerous seed that is going to grow in this province, because that experiment this government is playing with, with taxpayers' dollars, is a very dangerous experiment, an experiment that I think is going to have ramifications far beyond the life of this government, ramifications for the citizens of this province that are going to be extremely difficult to overcome.

Minister Sampson has constantly stated that Ontario needs to spend its correction dollars smarter and more efficiently, but there are two problems with this argument on privatization: first, the recent auditor's report shows, after five years of Tory spending, more money on fewer inmates and worse results; second, the policy direction they are headed in will clearly not deliver smarter spending.

Scotland on Sunday reported that a recent private prison project will cost over £160 million more than previously claimed. A leaked document regarding one jail in particular, which was hailed as a cheap way of running corrections in Scotland—it was run at £290 million over 25 years, instead of the £130 million agreed to in the contract. So we've witnessed that example in Scotland as a result of the move toward privatization. It's a move that is taking place in this province. There's no doubt in my mind that that same trend of understating what something is going to cost down the road is going to permeate into this province.

Scotland is also having other problems, including the covering up of actual staffing levels with the argument that released information would destroy commercial confidentiality.

We have examples in New Mexico in the United States, where corrections regularly inflates the numbers in administration, and so the city has been forced to hire more employees to review and oversee the whole billing concept.

The Oklahoma Department of Corrections has levied a large fine against a correctional facility for failing to meet its contractual obligations regarding medical care of state prisoners.

In Utah, Cornell Corrections with the state Department of Corrections is prepared to complete a contract for the state's first privatized medium security prison, which will house inmates for \$62 a day. The problem is that the state already houses them for \$43 a day.

The Miami Herald recently reported that Governor Jeb Bush is considering shutting down Wackenhut's privately run prison to save money.

I truly wish this government would look at other jurisdictions and not be bent and determined on this privatization move, because as I said previously, this is going to have drastic effects on this province down the road.

Minister Sampson talks about accountability, and this government is big on talking about accountability in this province, but you lose that accountability by contracting out employees and you lose that accountability by having three-year employees. Accountability exists when you have employees working for you on a full-time regular basis. Minister Sampson introduced the Corrections Accountability Act to ensure that the private prison company that will be contracted with to run the Penetang facility is accountable to the government. He's not the first one to try this, though. We have countless examples of other jurisdictions that have had enormous problems with accountability. This is not a new experiment, and the minister should realize that this legislation will not guarantee access to accountability.

We can go on. We can look at what has happened in New Mexico, in North Carolina, in Texas and in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin state Attorney General recently said, "The thought of private citizens in our state is so wrong that we need to work towards having our own good corrections policy."

I've heard reference made to Camp Turnaround this evening. Camp Turnaround is some success story in this attempt at privatization: escapes the first day, public correctional officers called in to secure the facility, cherry-picked inmates, overbilling and a budget that so far is now \$400,000 above and beyond the contract signed by the Ministry of Correctional Services. This is a pattern that's emerging as strikingly similar to that of the United States.

Look at what's happening in London, in the riding of the member for London-Fanshawe, with the Maurice Genest centre, a centre that's been privatized. We are seeing that centre not running the way it did when it was part of the public service. That was a model centre.

This government is working toward destroying the integrity of that centre but, I think, more importantly, working toward destroying the good work that civil servants did in ensuring that young individuals who were incarcerated had that ability to have good people help them get out of that facility and make a valuable contribution to the community. This isn't the intent of this government. This government is determined to continue its privatization agenda. It is a very sad day for this province that we've continued down this road.

We've witnessed, and I don't know why the government can't get this through their heads, what's happened with the privatization of the Ministry of Transportation in this province and seen where this government is going again, with Bill 137, to allow the privatization of more ministry services, including driver vehicle licensing, inspection and enforcement. What's sad about that piece of legislation and sad about the legislation we are dealing with here this evening is that there's no requirement for

public protection, safety, privacy, accountability or escalating costs of services.

We know first-hand that the public auditor has repeatedly warned that this government, the Harris government, is putting public lives at risk in its bent and warped direction, its rush to privatize, but worse yet, this rush to privatize with no apparent savings. That's a very sad day, and this government's track record of looking after the privacy and protecting the citizens of this province is deplorable.

We are on the road to more privatization in this province with the Province of Ontario Savings Office. The Province of Ontario Savings Office was established over 80 years ago to look after, most importantly, the rural parts of Ontario to ensure that they had access to banking facilities, that farmers in this province had access so that they weren't going to be gouged by the banks. This government is bent and determined, with its privatization agenda, to sell off POSO, a real risk to communities that have a Province of Ontario Savings Office that we are going to see those communities lose those facilities.

We've already seen their track record when they first intended to look at the privatization issue. They had their knuckles rapped by the Information and Privacy Commissioner of this province because they gave to a private corporation the addresses, social insurance numbers and account balances of those individuals. This direction is wrong. This government is wrong-headed in its direction to privatization.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** It is a pleasure to rise this evening and make a few comments on the comments from the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London.

I listened to his comments on privatization. First of all I want to say a little bit about Bill 25. I thought the intent of the act was to amend the Public Service Act. I'm not getting the same overtures from the act that the member has. He's talking about Camp Turnaround and privatization of correctional services.

I look at things like what's fair and what's equitable in the province of Ontario. I have to refer to another institution in my riding, the OPP general headquarters. Across Ontario I understand there are something like 2,500 civilian employees working for the Ontario Provincial Police. Those particular employees across this province want the opportunity of choice in the bargaining unit to which they belong. I don't see a problem with that. If that's going down the path of privatization, then maybe I'm wrong on that issue; the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London is thinking it's the privatization issue. I think it's an issue of fairness, and this bill will allow civilian employees of the Ontario Provincial Police who belong right now to the Ontario Public Service Employees Union to join the OPPA, a very strong and a very important collective bargaining unit in the province. I think it's fair and I fully intend to support this particular bill.

**2010**

**Mr Crozier:** A significant part of this bill, though, is about privatization. I spent some time, in leading off on

this bill the other night, to provide not only the government members but those who may have been watching that night, a history of the public service. There was a time when we didn't have a public service that was professional because outside workers, those outside the capital city, were all patronage appointments.

The problem with this is that if you start to move into the private sector again, you're going to be influenced by those who have the money. Part of the point we've been trying to make in all this is that you can't just write off the civil service and replace it with the private service, because there are too many outside influences. The old dollar will start to speak. You might think you're going to save money, but there are some people who are going to get rich on this thing.

We can speak individually, about jails—that experiment is underway and I guess time will tell—but when you take the civil service in its entirety, this bill allows deputy ministers, as we've gone over and over the last few nights, to delegate their authority to other deputy ministers, and then, beyond that, the authority can be delegated to this very mysterious person or persons. That's the part that scares me, and I think that's the part that should scare a very professional civil service in this province. "Person" or "persons" both start with the letter "P," and that's privatization.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I want to acknowledge, as the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London has, that this is a bill about privatization. This is a bill that will facilitate this government's privatizing ambulance service, privatizing jails and corrections, privatizing highway maintenance, privatizing home care, privatizing long-term care, privatizing hydro-electricity. For anyone who's noticing across Ontario, those are all the things that are on the privatization block by this government.

This government has said very clearly that despite the fiascos in California and the fiascos in Alberta, where people are now paying three and four times the price for electricity and sometimes can't get electricity, this government is going to do the same thing. It's going to sell off a publicly administered, publicly owned hydro-electricity system knowing that the result here will be as it has been in California and Alberta: people will pay more.

Similarly, the auditor pointed out that the government has an agenda of downloading ambulances on to municipalities, knowing that municipalities are already cash-strapped and they will have to sell off the operation of those ambulances to private operators. The auditor pointed out that the net cost to the people of Ontario will be \$100 million more a year. It will cost that much more money to operate the ambulance service in a downloaded municipal structure or in a privatized structure than it would cost if were part of a coordinated, province-wide ambulance system.

The point here I think for the people across Ontario, the citizens of Ontario, the taxpayers of Ontario, is that this is going to cost more. Hydro will cost you more,

ambulance service will cost you more, just as privatized home care is starting to cost more, just as privatized highway maintenance is costing more, and the Provincial Auditor noted that as well. So this bill really is all about privatizing Ontario's—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Questions, comments?

**Mr Wetlaufer:** Was it Chicken Little that said, "The sky is falling. The sky is falling"? Just because you say it, that doesn't mean it will.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Wetlaufer:** Yes. It was Chicken Little. Just because you say it, that doesn't make it so.

We don't need this act to privatize the civil service. But there is such a thing as a collective bargaining agreement, and that collective bargaining agreement exists for a reason. It protects the employees in OPSEU. It protects them.

What is the purpose of this bill? It's twofold, one of which is to give us some flexibility to provide to the government, to the taxpayer in exceptional circumstances—the member for Essex knows this; he's been briefed on it—skilled expertise. I cannot envision the possibility of exceptional circumstances existing for us to replace 60,000 employees. It's just impossible. It ain't going to happen.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Wetlaufer:** Now, there we go. Yes. When you don't know what you're talking about, talk nonsense. That's what you're doing.

The second purpose of this bill is to provide democracy for the civilian employees of the Ontario Provincial Police. Why should they be forced to belong to a union they don't want to belong to, that they feel does not represent their rights? They want to have the same rights as civilian employees of the municipal police forces.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response.

**Mr Peters:** I'd like to thank the members for Simcoe North, Essex, Kenora-Rainy River and Kitchener Centre for their comments this evening.

In particular to the member for Kitchener Centre, I'm trying to see here in the explanatory note where it talks about new classified services etc, where it says "for exceptional circumstances," and I don't see that. We know what your exceptional circumstances are. Your intent is to do away with as much as possible and to destroy the public service in this province. We've seen that agenda. It's an agenda that's been first and foremost in this government's eyes from the moment they were elected in 1995. We know that's your intent.

The citizens of Ontario, through their tax dollars, have come to expect good service from their public employees. It's a service that our public employees have provided for us since 1867. What you're intent on doing—this is a privatization bill. This continues along the lines of seeing the privatization of the Ministry of Transportation, the privatization that we're seeing leading toward it within our health care system.

This government is determined to do everything it can to destroy the public service in this province, and the

public service plays an important role in delivering those services. I want to thank those members who recognize the true intent of this legislation and what is in it. It's a sad day when the government members don't recognize what is within this piece of legislation.

The damage that is being done is damage that is going to take years and years to repair. It's a sad day for the citizens of Ontario to have to deal with the agenda of this government, the agenda of the privatization of this province.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate. I would just mention to members that we are now in 10-minute speeches.

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** I'm pleased to enter the debate today on Bill 25, the Public Service Statute Law Amendment Act, 2001.

Members of the opposition and third party seem very resistant to a greater role for the private sector in improving the province's infrastructure and building tomorrow's Ontario.

**2020**

We know that the province faces challenges in providing better transportation links, increasing capacity in schools, colleges and universities, helping our hospitals and health care facilities meet the needs of a growing and aging population, and helping to bring high-tech benefits to all the people of Ontario.

This government is committed to these priorities, but we cannot do this alone. The tax-and-spend days in this province are over. No longer can we gain all that we need out of tax dollars. We recognize that there is a need for tax dollars to be invested in areas of public good, but to do so exclusively by taking money from hard-working Ontarians is not sustainable. Both the Premier and the Minister of Finance have said we cannot continue to just increase government spending.

We must look for innovative ways whereby we can do more with less, not only in health but in all sectors. This requires innovation and thinking outside the box, but there are only so many things that we can do just thinking outside the box. When legislative frameworks become so outdated that they do not allow us to move with the times, we need to address them.

This is exactly the case with the Public Service Act. Its main provisions are more than 120 years old. It has not had a significant update in over 40 years. Forty years ago, in 1961, typewriters and hand-delivered mail had not even begun to give way to computers and e-mail. Women were almost completely absent from senior management, be it government or otherwise. Most families got by on a single income and worked 9 to 5. People had only begun to dream of walking on the moon, and we all lived under the threat of nuclear war.

The world is a much different place now. Countries are different, families are different, and the way we all work and live is so much different. The way government functions, the way it manages its resources, should likewise be different.

We have chosen our priorities. We are spending record amounts on health care, which Ontarians have told

us is their number one priority. But we cannot responsibly pay attention only to health care at the expense of all else. At the same time, we cannot continue to tax more. Ontarians' tax burden is too high, and this government is committed to doing something about that.

So what to do? If we don't have enough cash for all the priorities, as we might like, and refuse to take more money away from taxpayers, what do you do? One solution is the introduction of public-private partnerships which allow the government to take action on its priorities and those of the people of the province, while being responsible in the way we spend tax dollars.

There are many examples of this. SuperBuild is a great example. SuperBuild will coordinate all government infrastructure investments and spearhead the innovative development of public-private investment partnerships. At a minimum, \$20 billion will be invested over five years to renew hospitals, high-technology links, highways, educational institutions and other infrastructures.

These investments will deliver great benefits to people all across Ontario in all walks of life. They are programs which Ontarians want and need. Combined, they are programs which would outstrip our financial resources, if we acted alone. But when in partnership with the private sector, we can meet many more priorities than by ourselves.

I know there is more we can do, but to continue to make the most of the talent in our public service while working with other stakeholders, we must make some internal changes that will allow us to do so. Taxpayers are very unsympathetic to government when they are told bureaucratic hurdles prevent us from making most effective use of their resources. This should be the case. We should be adapting to the taxpayers, because in the end the government is their servant, not the other way around.

While making these changes, all people are concerned that we maintain a public service that is efficient, accountable and reliable. The Public Service Act sets out these principles and maintains them through a reporting line which makes each person employed in the public sector accountable to the deputy minister and, through them, to the government and taxpayer.

Nothing in these revisions detracts from the way in which public servants are accountable to the people of Ontario. All people who are affected by this will be accountable to the deputy minister, the government and the people of Ontario. Even if a person works with a private sector partner, they are still employed by the government of Ontario. Even if some authority is delegated to another person, the deputy minister is still responsible for those actions and still responsible for events directly related to that.

There is nothing in this act that would allow a person to deny their responsibility to the people of this province. Do the members opposite really think that a senior civil servant would allow a situation to develop which would invite problems, abuse or neglect? Here I thought they had faith in our professional civil service, and it seems,

from their comments over the past couple of days, that in fact they have very little. They are urging the government not to change the law, because it would allow these professionals and independent civil servants to abscond their duty and deny their accountability to taxpayers.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Every civil servant is still accountable. At the end of the day, they still must justify the decisions they make. If the decision involved delegation of some authority, they are no less accountable than they would be if they were down the line to a manager in the same ministry.

These changes are badly needed, and by opposing them, the members across oppose bringing government services into the 21st century to better meet the needs of the people we serve.

Changes in the Public Service Act will make government programs more accountable to the people of Ontario by giving it the flexibility required to reduce the waste and inefficiency involved with administering government programs. This amendment does not change the basic pillars of the Public Service Act. It still ensures accountability and makes its primary goal an efficient and reliable public service.

These changes will allow public servants, who are committed to delivering top-notch services, the ability to adapt to the world around them, moving into the 21st century. These changes are badly needed to meet the limited resources and the limitless ambition of our public service. We owe it to the people of this province to give their public service the flexibility it needs to deliver on its promises.

It's a pleasure for me to enter this debate this evening, and I'm anxious to hear the other members and their comments on this issue. Certainly it's a bill that this government truly supports, and the members on this side support this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions, comments?

**Mr Crozier:** The member for Thornhill brought up the point about delegation. I just want to refer to the bill under the area of "Collection from public servant." This is about private information and this scares me: "A person engaged in providing an integrated human resources program is authorized to collect, directly or indirectly, personal information about a public servant from a public servant." Then that "public servant may use personal information about a public servant disclosed by a person engaged in providing an integrated human resources program."

When it says "a person involved in a human resources program," it doesn't say "another public servant." We could get ourselves, I believe, into the same position as the government got itself into with the public savings office, where it took personal information, and it got out into the private sector.

Now, these are the kinds of things in a bill like this that scare us in the opposition and that should be of concern to those members in the government. And it goes on to say, "A person engaged in providing an integrated human resources program"—ie, private sector—"may

use personal information about a public servant disclosed by a public servant."

**2030**

This is so convoluted that I don't think there's any doubt that private information about public servants can get into the public domain. As was mentioned earlier by my friend from St Thomas, from the riding of London, that they've already had—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr Hampton:** I think there's one thing we need to draw attention to from the member from Thornhill's speech, and that is that she at least admits part of the government's agenda here with these so-called private-public sector partnerships, although what we've seen from this government is that private-public partnerships mean that the public gets stuck with the responsibility and the private sector gets the money.

Let me give you an example, and I think this is all going to emerge on the public stage very quickly. The government says that they're engaging in a private-public partnership with respect to the operation of the Bruce nuclear facility. Well, we've had a chance to get some of the documents related to that, and what we're able to see so far is that the British Energy consortium is going to be handed the capacity to make billions of dollars in profits while the people of Ontario are going to be stuck with the billion-dollar cost of decommissioning a nuclear station once it's outlived its useful life, and the taxpayers and people of Ontario will be stuck with the billion-dollar cost of storing the nuclear waste.

So we should thank the member for making the government's agenda clear. This government's definition of private-public sector partnerships is that the private sector gets the money while the taxpayers and the public of Ontario get stuck with the liabilities and the responsibilities.

If I could just refer to highway maintenance in Ontario, the Provincial Auditor has pointed out that in fact it is costing the people of Ontario more money to have private operators handle highway maintenance than it costs having the civil service do it. So we can look forward to, unfortunately, a—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr Dunlop:** I am pleased to make some comments on Bill 25, and I'd like to thank my colleague from Thornhill for her comments. I think she made a very interesting—in part of her comments she mentioned about the government, about the province of Ontario, moving into the 21st century. As a municipal politician and a business person coming to Queen's Park, that's one of the things I admired most about the Mike Harris government, because they spoke for responsibility and accountability. They talked about things like private-public partnerships. And unlike the leader of the third party, I look at things like the maintenance of our road system, the opportunity for companies to actually bid on that work. I don't see any problem with the level of maintenance we have. I think all governments for at least the last 20 years have tried, they've worked with the private sector, to provide

good road maintenance across the province of Ontario, and we see this with other things as well.

For example, our government believes strongly in the private sector. We are Conservatives. We are basically capitalists. We believe in that method of doing business. Perhaps the opposition would rather see all cars manufactured by the public service. Perhaps they'd rather see all manufacturing done by the public service. We on this side of the House, as the government, do not believe that way. For that reason, I support this bill, I'll continue to support it and I thank the member for Thornhill for her comments.

**Mr Sergio:** Just a couple of comments on the presentation by the member from Thornhill: there is one fundamental truth that came out of her presentation, and that is that the government of Ontario is the servant of the people of Ontario.

**Mr Mazzilli:** That's what it is.

**Mr Sergio:** That is very true. That is a good assertion by the member. But if that is the case, that the government indeed is the servant of the people of Ontario, it has to be responsible, and it has to be accountable as well. I'm afraid we are moving closer, especially when it comes to our public employees, to privatizing this very important sector. If we're doing that, who is going to be responsible for private actions on behalf of the people of Ontario and the public employees of Ontario?

With something like the 407, who is accountable for the 407 now? I wonder. Shouldn't we hold the government responsible for their actions? We know too well that once you turn it over to a private entity, you lose that control. If you lose control, you're losing accountability, and once you lose accountability, then the government that is supposed to be the servant of the people of Ontario has abdicated its responsibilities and turned over those very responsibilities to someone else down the road, who has not been elected by the people of Ontario. They want to know who ultimately is going to be accountable for the actions of a private consortium. I think the people of Ontario would really like to know that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mrs Molinari:** I'd like to thank the members from Ottawa Centre and Kenora-Rainy River, the member from Simcoe North and the member from York West, for their participation in this debate.

The member from Kenora-Rainy River commented that my debate here this evening made it very clear to him what this bill is, so I'm pleased to be able to provide that clarity for the member. With that, I'd like to quote from a 1993 study that the NDP commissioned. It found, "Against a backdrop of economic constraint, multiple demands on resources and increasing complexity of our services, we must examine our business practices to ensure their effectiveness and efficiency in meeting our customer service needs. We must find more efficient ways of financing our business by redeployment of resources, by streamlining of our organization and by employing appropriate technology."

It goes on to say, "Our vision must be to commit to high-quality service delivery that achieves the best value

for tax dollars anywhere. The leadership challenge to accomplish this mission is large. We must accept it. Ministries and central agencies must work together to set priorities, remove barriers and undertake bold strategies to meet the service expectations of our customers. Ontario's citizens deserve no less."

That was in a study commissioned by the NDP, and the member from Kenora-Rainy happens to be the leader of that party. I wanted to make sure I read that into the record this evening.

**2040**

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I am pleased to add my comments to this debate. As you know, we're talking about Bill 25, An Act to amend the Public Service Act and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, 1993.

There are some things that are blatantly obvious when you peruse these sections in Bill 25. One of the things that is very clear from the very beginning, and that is really wrong, is that this specific bill has been in circulation internally for many months. There have been a number of meetings. There have been many communications between ministers and ministries. Yet when it came down to producing the notes and giving an opportunity to OPSEU and other members of the public who are interested in discussing this issue, we find that was reduced to—I have the proof in my hands because I'm reading from a letter that was addressed to Mr Wilson, and the union had only been given a five-day opportunity to respond, to make their briefing and their presentations on this bill.

While this government had many months, my question to those who are responsible for Bill 25 is, why has OPSEU only been informed about this and given the opportunity to respond in that time frame, that window, only a five-day opportunity to make submissions on these discussions? That isn't right. There should have been more time given because of the urgency of this situation. We also know that this specific bill makes it easier—that's the intent of it—for the government to contract out part of the public service to the private sector.

What's wrong with this bill? Having made my first comments on the opportunity of five days, let me make my second comment to what's wrong with this bill.

The second item is the question of a quality public service. What makes for a quality public service? I think that what makes for a quality public service is, first, that there should be security of employment, and second, that there should be some sense of stability with the employer. The question that must be raised is, when government services are handed over to the private sector and when the ministers make that decision to contract out those services, what assurances will we have that there is stability in the workforce and security for employees? Are these employees going to speak out when there's a real problem? I suggest they may not speak out if their job is at stake. Consequently, if there is something wrong as there was in Walkerton, will the employees speak out

if there's no job security and no job stability? I submit to you those are the two fundamentals for a quality public service, and those will not be in place. At least I don't think so. Maybe someone can enlighten me about this, but I think those items will not be in place.

The other issue I'd like to address is that of profit. We don't think there's anything wrong with making a profit. That's not what's wrong here. But I think that when you contract out services like providing security for jails or services like ambulance service—the government now is talking about perhaps contracting out some services that are hospital-related. We certainly know about highway maintenance. We also know that licensing and drivers' licences are now being contracted out. It wouldn't stop anyone from a contract—marriage licences. The point is that if there is profit involved, and obviously that is the private sector cry, then I submit that the quality of public service will have to suffer and we'll be suffering because of that.

The other point I want to make is that it also reduces the accountability, because it blurs the lines between various ministries. The minister will be able to designate a private sector person. This is valid across ministries, by the way. A minister would be able to designate a private person to be responsible for service delivery. To my mind, this will blur the lines of responsibility within ministries.

I found it very interesting that the member from Thornhill, when she made her presentation, indicated that this bill is also designed to root out inefficiencies in the system. I would submit that we have the Red Tape Commission, and the Red Tape Commission was supposed to be organized to root out inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in the government. Here, on the one hand, we have the Red Tape Commission not being able to do what the member from Thornhill is saying private sector opportunities will do. Obviously there's something skewed here. If we have to contract out services to the private sector in order to root out inefficiencies, then I would submit that this government should look at rooting out inefficiencies prior to contracting out these kinds of services. Why can this government not root out inefficiencies now? Why would we need Bill 25 to root out these inefficiencies?

I was on the private bills committee. We made certain recommendations about how to root out inefficiencies. In fact, when a municipality is forced to come to Queen's Park because they're unable to get a law passed that will permit that municipality to cut the grass in front of city hall on certain public lands, then obviously that is wrong. That is an inefficiency that should've been rooted out. While we were making these recommendations to the Red Tape Commission, it just seemed that many of these recommendations went into a black hole and nothing much was done. In short, what I'm simply saying is, we don't need Bill 25 to root out inefficiencies. We can do it without Bill 25.

Now, I grant you, there are some sections in here which are somewhat useful. OK, we will grant that. But

the major point is that you're introducing so many acts, so many various parts of this bill that are not really essential.

The bill also speaks about public-private partnerships. Of course, we can go on all night to talk about that and the inefficiencies found within that form of operation.

I see I'm running out of time, but simply let me remind you that this bill, as it stands, has not received enough discussion. The persons who are affected by it would request that you give them more time so they can make their presentations properly. I would ask tonight that you do that, that you consider that and that you provide this service to OPSEU.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions? Comments?

**Mr Galt:** It was rather interesting to hear the presentation by the member from Davenport, particularly when he got into the area of consultation. He is making reference to some only five days of consultation. I think maybe his math is just a bit rusty and just isn't quite up. Actually, it occurred between April and June. That's over a three-month period during the year 2000. Actually, they've had opportunity for input all the way from June 2000 right up until May of this year. That's a full year as well. I think he should check those facts. But then that's typical of the opposition as they look at consultation, because really the hallmark of our government is consultation. Maybe they're reflecting on how they acted when they were in government.

Also, he talked about rooting out inefficiency, that you can just draw with a magic wand called the Red Tape Commission and there, bingo, all the inefficiencies are gone. With changing times, you can always improve on various scenarios, various situations. If you think the status quo was OK, man, you are in big trouble. It sounds like just because he thinks we struck the Red Tape Commission, everything is in order.

Then he goes on to comment that we don't need Bill 25. Here's an act, 122 years old, that hasn't been touched in some 40 years, and this member from Davenport says that we really don't need to bring in Bill 25 to change the Ontario Public Service Act. I think it's way overdue, and he might have criticized us for not bringing it in in our first term. But certainly when you see the kind of review that was carried out by the NDP, it's very obvious that this bill is indeed needed.

2050

**Mr Peters:** It's a pleasure to stand up and support my colleague the member for Davenport. I think the member points out very clearly that we know what the agenda of this government is. The agenda of this government is to see the privatization of as many services in this province as possible.

We also know what the other hidden agenda of this government is. This government is on an agenda to try and break unions in this province. We know that OPSEU has been a good representative of individuals in this province in ensuring that we have good delivery of public services and good public servants. But this government has been on an attack agenda to work toward destroying unions in this province. What we're seeing here is not

only the privatization of more public services in this province, but again, another attack on collective bargaining and on unions in this province. I think it's a sad day, what we're seeing come out of this government, with this bent, warped agenda of privatization.

The public wants to have good service. They want to have service delivered in the proper manner and they want to have public servants who are going to be accountable. This government, which talks about accountability and prides itself on accountability, is showing its true colours. They're taking away the accountability to citizens in this province, the accountability for guarantees to citizens in this province to know that they are going to have their services delivered in a proper way. It is an extremely sad day that we're seeing this happen.

We've seen what's happened with Camp Turnaround. We've seen what's happened with the Genest centre in London. We've seen what's happened around this province with the privatization of roads. We've seen what's happened with the privatization of labs. We know what's going to happen with the new jail in Penetanguishene. The privatization agenda of this government is extremely foolish.

**Mr Hampton:** As the debate has taken place here tonight, the kinds of operations this government is interested in are becoming more apparent.

Let me just use as an example something that exists out there now. Sunnybrook hospital is a public hospital. It was paid for with public money and it's maintained with public money. It falls under the auspices not only of Ontario legislation but also the Canada Health Act. But this government is doing something which is quite incredible at Sunnybrook hospital: it is actually operating a private, for-profit cancer treatment centre there.

The government talks a good line about accountability, but we've asked now for almost six weeks for a copy of the contract, a copy of the agreement which sets up this private, for-profit cancer treatment centre in a public hospital, and the government that boasts about accountability says, "Sorry, we can't give you a copy of the contract. We can't disclose any of the financial relationships. We can't disclose whether taxpayers' money is being used efficiently, whether it's being used effectively. We can't disclose whether or not the treatment regimes here are in accord with what is the usual medical practice. Because we've entered into this business relationship with this private, for-profit company, we can't give any of this information to the Legislature of Ontario, nor to the taxpayers of Ontario."

This is the kind of public-private working relationship that this government has in mind, where taxpayers' money goes to private, for-profit agencies, but the taxpayers of Ontario are denied the opportunity to know what's happening.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further comments or questions? The Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources):** Mr Speaker, may I say that you're dressed rather elegantly for the occasion this evening.

It's a privilege to stand and join in this debate on Bill 25 tonight. I've heard the comments from members opposite and members of this caucus as we engage in this debate. Often we hear comments that are really not based on the contents of this bill. I suppose that's not unusual in this place. We hear comments that are based on ideology. We hear comments about privatization. We hear comments about the effects of privatization in other sectors. All of those of course are biased by the prism through which the observer looks.

I note with some interest that if we were to take all of the observations of the opposition members—the member for Davenport, the leader of the third party, all of those observations—and really take them to heart, what we would have is an Ontario that never changed, where we never changed anything, where we were condemned to 40-year-old acts that had never evolved and modernized and come together in what is a growing and increasingly complex society. I wonder if that would be good for the people of Ontario.

If people reflect on that, I think they will find the comments of the member from Thornhill this evening to be very well reasoned, because the member from Thornhill stood in this place and spoke for a moment about the difference this would make to the lives of people who are directly affected by Bill 25, and those are good effects. This will make Ontario a little better for those people. I believe the intention of this place, of this Legislature, is to look reasonably and rationally and to do those things that make life better for the people of Ontario, and surely that's the purpose of Bill 25. I thank the member from Thornhill for making that obvious to all of us this evening.

**Mr Sergio:** I have to compliment our colleague the member for Davenport on a wonderful presentation on Bill 25. Taking some of his comments, I think we have to say that the people who are involved here are our own people—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Sergio:** That's fine. I'll take the extra minute here. That's OK.

The important thing to remember here is our own employees, the public service. They are the same people who have families; they have to send children to school, they have to buy homes, they have to buy cars and they have to support our economy as well. Who said that a happy employee is worth a lot more than an unhappy employee? In which direction are we moving? Which way is the government going about it?

There is an urgency to look at the fairness of this particular Bill 25, and at a particular area. When we allow the powers that be to dictate who to hire and when and under what conditions, or who to fire under the same conditions, and even to discipline and stuff like that, the question is, how can we allow fairness to take place when the checks and balances are not here? Because it is no longer the Premier, it is no longer the minister, it is no longer the deputy; it's someone else down the line who makes the law, if you will. That is not fair. I think we should be aware of that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response? The member for Davenport.

**Mr Ruprecht:** I want to thank the members for their comments.

I would like to address myself to the specific comments that were made by the member for Northumberland. He said we should check our facts. Well, the fact is I'm looking at a letter that was written to Mr Kevin Wilson, who is the director of the corporate labour relations/negotiations secretariat of the Management Board Secretariat. In the letter there are various points, but one of the major ones, and it's the first one, talks about the "shortcomings in the consultation process."

Here is the member for Northumberland saying that the hallmark of the Harris government is consultation. If that's the hallmark, then I wish the member from Northumberland could stand in his place and answer this question. This letter says that OPSEU did not have a year to respond and make specific comments on Bill 25; no, it had five days. I'm reading from the letter, "Public Service Act 'reform' has been under active consideration for many months"—internally, of course; Discussions with Management Board and minister to minister and even at the lower levels.

That may be the case. But I'm telling you, that was internal. When it came to the crux of opening up the process and the windows of opportunity to provide input from the public service, from those who are affected specifically, and that's OPSEU, it was a five-day opportunity. It says here, "This contrasts sharply with the consultation 'window' being provided to bargaining unit public servants and their unions. OPSEU has been given a five-day opportunity to make submissions on a vague discussion paper, really just a series of questions."

2100

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Hampton:** I want to talk about what government members have increasingly admitted here tonight, and that is that the Public Service Act and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act are both being amended so that the government can in effect invite private for-profit corporations to take over more and more of the operations of the public service.

I referred earlier in my remarks to what's happening now at Sunnybrook hospital as an example. Sunnybrook hospital continues to be a public hospital within the legislation of the Ministry of Health—publicly funded, publicly administered—and also falls under the legislation known as the Canada Health Act. This government has decided that many of the services that are operated out of Sunnybrook hospital are now going to be turned over to private for-profit corporations. So this government has created a relationship with a private for-profit corporation that is operating a cancer treatment centre. They get money for this from the government of Ontario. They get taxpayers' money.

When someone is providing a health service, and they are getting taxpayers' money for this and have a contractual relationship with an agency of the government o

Ontario, one would expect—this is taking place in a public hospital with public money, taxpayers' money—that the citizens of Ontario would be able to have some accountability mechanism for what's happening, but in fact there is no accountability mechanism. The taxpayers of Ontario or the patients are not allowed to see how this private for-profit corporation is being paid, how much they're being paid and whether they're being paid more than a cancer treatment centre operated by Cancer Care Ontario would receive. You're not allowed to see any of those things.

We are told from questions we've asked that in fact it's costing more money to treat patients at this private for-profit cancer treatment facility than it costs in any other Cancer Care Ontario facility, and similarly that the treatments are limited so that when there is a particularly complex case, ie one that might be more costly in terms of the treatment required, it's put back into the public system. So we're told from the questions we've asked that this is costing the taxpayers of Ontario more money, that the operators of the private for-profit clinic are making a lot of money off this, but that when they come across complex cases, they feed those back into the not-for-profit cancer treatment side of Cancer Care Ontario.

I think most people would be upset about that. You're paying more of the taxpayers' money and you're getting less patient care. But what's really galling is that you're not allowed to see any of the agreements. You're not allowed to see how this work. In other words, there is no accountability. Taxpayers' money, public money, is being funnelled into a private for-profit organization, but taxpayers are not allowed to see the machinery of what's happening here, they're not allowed to see all the details of what's happening, and they're not allowed to demand accountability. What a very upsetting situation. What a very wrong-headed thing to be happening to taxpayers' money. But this government is presiding over it and in fact promotes it.

Why is this important? It's important because if you read the sections of this legislation, Bill 25, a number of the sections will not only permit this kind of activity, but they will increase it and will ensure that it happens in a more and more widespread way. For example, changes to sections 23 and 24 of the Public Service Act ensure that the delegation of authority from the deputy minister to any person—not to any assistant deputy minister, not to any branch director, but to any person—means that in effect it will be easier for the government to take what are now public services, turn them over to private for-profit organizations for the operation, and we'll be stuck with the same situation we have at Sunnybrook hospital and with Cancer Care Ontario.

The public of Ontario will not be entitled to find out. "Tell us about this agreement, tell us how much money is being paid, tell us what services are being provided, and tell us the cost per unit or the measurement of that." The government's response is going to be the same as it has been at Sunnybrook hospital. "Under the terms of the agreement we're not allowed to tell you. Under the terms

of the agreement, we're not allowed to fulfill that basic function of government, which is to account to you for how taxpayers' money is being spent."

Why should people be disturbed by this? For a number of reasons. I think most people in the public service want to be held accountable. They want to be able to come forward and say, "This is my job. This is what I'm supposed to do. This is what we're paid. This is the service we're supposed to provide." But it's very easy to see, when you look at this debacle that's happening at Sunnybrook hospital, that even that basic information can be denied, because the former public service would no longer be accountable to a deputy minister. They would be accountable to the manager of a private for-profit corporation who would be able to say, "Sorry, under our agreement with the government, you're not allowed to disclose any of these things. You're not allowed to disclose what profits we're making from the operation of this service. You're not allowed to disclose whether or not we've ratcheted down the public service or done anything like that." So there is no accountability here. In fact, it is the denial of accountability.

I just want to go back to something I spoke to earlier because I think it's important. If you look at the services this government has turned over to their private corporate friends already, the Provincial Auditor has remarked over and over again that what's happening is that the public is being stuck with a bigger bill and is getting less service. If you look at the privatization of highway maintenance, the Provincial Auditor has pointed out that in fact it's costing more for the private companies to provide highway maintenance than it cost members of the public service.

There's a reason for that. The Provincial Auditor has outlined some of the reasons why that's happening. If you have a Ministry of Transportation that is able to go out there and buy vehicles on a fleet basis, they can get a cheaper rate on the vehicles. It's the same as Bell Canada. If Bell Canada goes out and buys 300 half-tons, they can get a fleet policy on the purchase of those half-ton. When you privatize the service and turn it over to a series of smaller private companies, there goes the savings from a fleet purchase policy.

Similarly, where you have a number of vehicles and you're insuring them in terms of auto insurance, you can get a fleet policy when you have a number. But when you turn it over to a number of private companies, there go the insurance savings on the fleet policy. Similarly, when you're dealing with the payment of workers' compensation, or WSIB, when you have a large number of employees all covered by the same general framework, you can get a better rate in terms of WSIB. When you turn it over and privatize it to a number of small companies, there go your savings in terms of WSIB.

The Provincial Auditor has delineated where savings are being lost by this government's desire to turn the operation of services over to private sector companies that lose those economies of scale, but then want a 15% return, a profit, on top of all that. So it's not unusual that

the private operation of the public service will cost 20% more or 25% more to deliver. People are paying more money and in effect getting the same service or less service.

2110

Let me just give you an example of another area that's been privatized. Home care in this province used to be provided by community non-profit agencies like Red Cross and the Victorian Order of Nurses. This government in the last seven years has, piece by piece, turned over home care to a series of private, for-profit corporations, many of them American private, for-profit corporations. Those corporations will tell you, when you look at their annual returns, that they want a 15% return on the contract. So if, for example, the contract is for \$2 billion to provide home care in Ontario, they will want to have at least a \$250-million profit line on top of that.

They will also tell you that they pay their executive cadre a lot more than someone working in the public or community service would receive. So Olsten health care incorporated boasts that they pay their executive cadre \$10 million in salaries and bonuses. Right there, on that contract that privatizes a public service, \$260 million is lost to nothing more than executive pay and the profit motive; \$260 million more in cost to provide the service, but patients are getting less care. That's why people ought to—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Questions, comments?

**Mr Wettkaufer:** The leader of the third party is starting to sound like a Liberal.

**Mr Hampton:** Please don't insult me. I'm at least consistent.

**Mr Wettkaufer:** Sorry, I didn't mean to insult. He talked about the hospitals, but his example of a hospital was a private, for-profit hospital. It's not that we've turned one over from public to private; it is a private hospital. We don't control hospitals anyway; they have their own boards of directors. Their boards of directors control them.

He also was talking about turning over the public service to a private, for-profit corporation. He's saying that's what we're doing. I don't think we're turning over the public service to a private, for-profit corporation. We have an obligation to try to recruit the best employees possible because we need top-notch talent; that's why.

**Mr Hampton:** Tell me what is happening at Sunnybrook.

**Mr Wettkaufer:** But it will be in exceptional circumstances. I've said this over and over and over again tonight. It seems to go in one ear over there and out the other. Maybe that is an explanation in itself.

The proposed amendments will give us the flexibility that we need, something the former leader of your party also advocated, by the way. Bob Rae advocated it, and we talked about that earlier tonight. Some of my colleagues raised that.

The bill does not lessen accountability. The public service is not going to be less accountable. We still will

be responsible for the quality of their services. We are responsible.

**Mr Hampton:** Tell me about Sunnybrook.

**Mr Wettkaufer:** I know you don't understand that. We're delegating authority but we're still ultimately responsible. What this will do is allow public servants to be managed more effectively.

**Mr Crozier:** I want to re-emphasize something that's been said earlier, I'm sure, during the debate, and that is the percentage of the public service that is now under contract. This, to me, is leading even more so in that direction, but almost 25% of the public service is now under contract. Something that I would think the government, in its experience with business, would understand is that there are those things that are called institutional memory and institutional assets. They're almost one and the same. That is, the more you dilute your institutional assets—those who have been with you, those who understand how you work, those who want to work for you—the less effective you can become.

I would have thought as well that over the six years, being the experts in management that those from the government say they are, they would have been able to say, "Even if there are some faults in the civil service"—and we all have faults, so I think that's a statement that I can make relatively positively. Even if there are faults in the public service, I would have thought the great managers of Ontario could have solved these problems; in other words, they could have made the public service, the civil service, more efficient and that they wouldn't have to go to the private sector, they wouldn't have to dilute a civil service that's been with us more than 100 years, and we wouldn't have had to lose the institutional assets that we've built up.

**Mr Galt:** It's quite interesting, the presentation made by the leader of the third party. I think back to the commission that his government sponsored in 1993. A lot of what he has to say really is counter to what came out in that particular commission. He was in the cabinet at that time, and I would think he would have been supportive of his leader and would have been working with him; you know, things like, "Fewer than four in 10 Ontarians agree that the services provided by the Ontario government were of value to the taxpayers' money." This came from Bob Rae in the *Globe and Mail*. Again, he says, "In business you know that customers matter, because if you don't pay attention to customers they go elsewhere."

The public service is a monopoly, and those customers don't have a choice. Those are some of the things we're hearing so much in the concerns that they express.

It sounds like, from his presentation, something that's privatized is something evil, something bad. We're not talking necessarily public versus private; we're talking monopoly versus competition. Therein lies the difference. The difficulty is with a monopoly. If you bring in some competition, it's healthy all around.

What an opportunity we have today. We've heard how good our public school system is, so we give through the tax break some assistance to those independent schools

that now have a great opportunity to see indeed, as Earl Manners would say, how great the system is. I don't disbelieve him, but now there will be a little bit of competition over and above the separate versus the public. So again, it overcomes more of that monopoly problem and there truly will be competition in there. We look forward to good things from that.

**Mr Sergio:** I have to compliment the leader of the third party, the member for Kenora-Rainy River, for the presentation on the substance of Bill 25, especially when it comes to our employees, especially the public service employees.

I think it's worth noting that they are taxpayers of Ontario and, as such, they have the same responsibilities as any other Ontarian. They have the same responsibility to grow a family, to educate a family, to purchase goods, to pay the mortgage, to go on holidays and whatever else. But we have to keep in mind, and I think that the leader of the third party has expressed this point extremely well, that the people working for the people of Ontario, our public employees, are wonderful people, and there's nothing wrong either with the employees of a private organization. The only difference is here: once we turn over the sensibility, that responsibility, that accountability to a private corporation, we're losing everything.

Introducing that element and the element of privatizing, of course the public employees of the province of Ontario feel threatened. They don't feel comfortable any more. They feel that the government is not protecting them.

What happens if an employee is unjustly penalized? Who is going to be responsible once it's passed over to a private corporation? Who is going to be responsible? The government won't be responsible, because they don't have the control any more. We are dealing with health issues, environmental issues. Who is going to be in charge of that? I think that's what we're saying.

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#### **The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Hampton:** I want to thank all the members for their comments. I want to point out to the members of the government that they want to be very careful in the limited quotations they've taken from a 1993 study by the then NDP government, because that study was about improving public service, about ensuring that public services were delivered better. It wasn't about privatizing or selling off public services, which is what all of you guys are about. I wanted to clarify that remark.

I also want to point out to people that in all of my remarks I've been careful to point to the comments of the Provincial Auditor. It's the Provincial Auditor who says this government's determination to preside over the dis-integration of the provincial ambulance service and to force it down to municipalities, which are neither geographically situated nor financially situated to take over the ambulance service, is going to cost \$50 million a year more, to operate the ambulance service. So people are going to have an ambulance service that is no longer integrated and will not be as efficient or as effective, but will cost them \$50 million more.

Similarly, the auditor has called into question the ministry of corrections and the private operation of jails. We need to put it right on the record that when a private corporation operates a jail, when they have their annual general meeting, they're not going to ask the people who work in the jail, "How many inmates did you rehabilitate this year? How effective were you in rehabilitation? How much did you do for public safety this year? Are you better at ensuring public safety?" They're not going to ask any of those things. They're going to ask one question, "How much money did we make this year?" because that's why the corporation exists.

#### **The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** It's my privilege to be here to talk today about the amendments to the Public Service Act that our government has introduced. Over the past few days, there has been a lot of talk about the proposed amendments we are here to debate. Some people have chosen to focus on the Workforce Information Network and have made claims that it will lead to a violation of individual privacy. That's just talk. I am here today to tell the real truth about the proposed amendments to the Public Service Act, the WIN project and our e-government initiatives.

Our efforts to bring e-government to the Ontario public service do not stop with WIN. We are committed to taking the steps necessary to bring help to the delivery of government services, both internally and externally, into the 21st century. We must help equip and position Ontario to meet the challenging needs and expectations the people of Ontario have. We believe there should be an involved government embracing technology and the benefits it brings to the workplace. Technology enables government employees to do their work in a more efficient manner, and ultimately helps improve and provide the taxpayers with a greater value for their money.

We have moved to ensure that government is prepared to meet the needs of Ontarians into the 21st century. The government of Ontario continues to make progress on its development and introduction of electronic business initiatives across the Ontario public sector. Our goal is to become a world leader in the delivery of electronic services by 2003. By improving the way we do business and aligning our initiatives, we are ensuring that the taxpayers of Ontario continue to receive the best value for money while accessing services when, where and how they want. By reforming our infrastructure design and information technology delivery, we are able to compete better today and through the coming years. Our new electronic programs and services are the way in which we will improve how we do business.

Compared to other jurisdictions, Ontario ranks very high in what it is accomplishing and doing in the area of electronic service delivery and e-government. Making use of technology involves much more than computers, fax machines and e-mail. It involves projects like the Ministry of Natural Resources, of which the minister is here tonight, and the on-line campsite reservation system; government of Ontario service kiosks where you can

renew drivers' licences, among other services; and of course each ministry has its own Web site where people can access a wealth of information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. I might add that the MNR's campsite reservation system is working very well, with a large number of people responding to that on a regular basis, an increase in the people who are using the facilities.

But this is not all. Several internal initiatives are reducing the amount of time our employees have to spend on time-consuming administrative tasks. This frees up hours upon hours of time to better deliver services to people, services that are accessible, consolidated and provide value for money.

These are some examples of our initiatives and our forward-looking approach to doing business. We will continue to look for ways in which we can improve our services and make the best use of the taxpayers' resources. While we will always be on the lookout for new and innovative ways to deliver services, we will also strive to ensure the security and integrity of our information technology infrastructure. Only by doing this will we be on the cutting edge of secure, reliable technology that enhances efficiency while helping diminish privacy concerns.

Ontario is a world leader in this field and has arrived here because of its coordinated approach to ensuring we address issues surrounding the integrity of our resources. The measures we have taken include implementing iSERV, a central unit responsible for both privacy and operations, to ensure the security of the government information technology infrastructure, systematically implementing a process to identify and deal with areas of

high risk, and implementing an information protection centre to proactively ensure the technological infrastructure is safe from corruption.

This approach covers the entire public service and ensures we adopt policies which are rigorously applied and train all employees to understand their role in this important process. This comprehensive approach will help protect our investment and ensure that we will be able to sustain our important services to the people of Ontario.

Some of those who are watching this debate tonight may be wondering what WIN is and whether the amendments to the PSA compromise the security of the personal employee infrastructure that WIN tracks. These legislative amendments do not jeopardize employee information. This, with all due respect, is a red herring, and I'll tell you why. WIN is the Ontario public service's integrated, enterprise-wide, human resource management system which provides access to information and HR services for employees, managers and HR professionals across the ministries of the Ontario public service.

The objectives of the project are to provide consistent HR data across the OPS, improve access to HR information to support management decision-making, streamline inconsistent HR business processes, enable easy access by employees to their HR data through self-service, and support for manager accountability for people management.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We've reached the hour. Thank you very much.

It being 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 2129.*

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Government  
of Ontario

No. 18



Nº 18

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario

Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 17 May 2001

Jeudi 17 mai 2001

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
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Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 17 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 17 mai 2001

*The House met at 1000.*

*Prayers.*

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SANTÉ ET LA SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL

Mr Agostino moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 34, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to increase the penalties for contraventions of the Act and regulations / Projet de loi 34, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail en vue d'augmenter les peines en cas d'infraction aux dispositions de la Loi et des règlements.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** The member for Hamilton East has 10 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I thank the members of the House who will participate in this debate. I certainly plan to make this a non-partisan debate, because this is a non-partisan issue as it relates to health and safety and to the safety of working people and working families across the province of Ontario. I don't think there's any doubt everyone in this House believes very strongly that we must do everything possible to prevent another injury, to prevent another death in the workplace.

We all come to this Legislature with good intentions; I think we all come here with diverse backgrounds, diverse communities, diverse political, ideological ideas and diverse ways that we believe this province should be. We also bring with us, which I believe is a very positive thing, our life experiences, that often help us be part of this Legislature and shape policies, ideas and government legislation that hopefully will make this a better place to live. This bill is motivated by what I believe is necessary for the people of Ontario. This bill would make us among the leaders, if not the leaders, in the toughest penalties for health and safety violations in North America.

There is a personal experience and reason that I believe it's important, as well, to bring this legislation to the floor today and to have this legislation debated and

hopefully passed. Shortly after my family arrived from Italy, my father suffered a horrific industrial accident at the age of 33. He had been working as a child, from the age of 14, in Italy in construction as a bricklayer. Two years after arriving in Canada, on a worksite in Dunnville, he was laying cement, was backing away from where he was working and fell through an uncovered elevator shaft 40 feet to the ground. He was instantly paralyzed from the waist down and spent the next 30 years of his life in a wheelchair, in an accident that contributed to his premature death at the age of 63. That was an accident that was preventable. All it would have taken would have been a wooden barrier around that elevator shaft and he would not have fallen through. There were no charges laid; there were no fines; there were no convictions; there was absolutely nothing.

We had to make it on our own as best we could. As a young boy, I remember seeing my father in a wheelchair and could not do the things with my father that most young boys want to do, to partake in activities. As that accident was preventable, that tragedy that struck my family and changed my family forever, I believe that many, many others that have occurred since and will occur today, tomorrow, next week and next year in this province are also preventable. Unfortunately, the statistics are staggering. In Ontario last year, 409 people died either directly as a result of workplace injury or from related illnesses, from workplace illness or disease.

Unfortunately, the fines and convictions in cases in Ontario last year declined. In 1999 there were 309 convictions and \$6.9 million in fines for workplace health and safety violations. Put that in perspective with the fact that in 1999, 358,000 Ontarians were injured in the workplace; 409 died in the workplace. The total fines and convictions in 1999 were \$6.9 million and 309 convictions for this horrific number of accidents that occurred.

As we get close to the summer and young people are now going into the workforce, young people have summer jobs to pay for their university, to pay for spending money for high school. In 1999, 16,000 young women and men between the ages of 15 and 24 were injured on the job. Sixteen of those were killed. Sixteen young people were killed on the job in Ontario in 1999.

People have often turned tragedies into a way of helping others. One of those heroes is Mr Rob Ellis. His son, Dave, at the age of 18, was killed the second day on the job. He was working unsupervised, untrained, in a bakery. The young man, at the age of 18, died simply as a result of going to work to save money for university for

the next year. I want to pay tribute here today to Dave Ellis's father, who has made a crusade across Ontario of talking to young people, of talking to employees, to employers and to governments to change legislation. I'm pleased to tell the House that Mr Ellis is a supporter of this bill today. He believes it's a good thing for Ontario, for working people, for working families, and for young people in Ontario if we pass this legislation.

Currently, if convicted under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, an individual can be fined no more than \$25,000 or imprisoned for no more than 12 months. A corporation, if convicted, could be subject to a fine of \$500,000. My bill, if passed by this Legislature, would increase the fine for individual conviction to up to \$100,000 and would increase the term of imprisonment to up to two years. A corporation convicted of an offence would be subject to a fine of up to \$1 million. That would be doubled.

A new part of the bill for this as well is I believe there's a corporate responsibility to workplace health and safety from not only the manager, the supervisor, the boss. I believe it has to be a corporate responsibility: the directors, officers of corporations must make it their challenge as well, must make it their daily routine to ensure that they have a safe workplace.

#### 1010

If this bill is passed, it would be the first legislation in North America that would actually allow for the conviction and jailing of officers and directors of corporations who are found responsible of neglect that causes death or injury in the workplace. We do it today in Ontario under the Environmental Protection Act for individuals who are charged with violations under the EPA, which means, for example, that if your company discharges pollutants illegally, if your company does something illegal that hurts the environment and you're convicted, a director could go to jail for that. An officer of a corporation could be jailed or fined. We don't have that under the health and safety act. If we think about it, we have a situation where someone, a director or officer, who violates the environmental laws in Ontario, as serious as it is, can go to jail, but if a director or an officer of the company that they belong to violates the health and safety act and someone dies on the job or is seriously injured, there is no provision for a fine or penalty or jail terms.

If we do this today it sends out a very clear message to Ontario as a whole that this province, this Legislature, is serious about protecting our workers, that yes, everyone, right from the floor of the plant to the head office to the board of directors to the shareholders, has a responsibility for ensuring we have the safest workplace in North America here in Ontario. It can be done.

We owe it to the men and women who have been killed, who have been injured, in particular to young people. I want to go back to it again. As young people today are going into the workforce for summer jobs, many of those young people unfortunately will not go back to school in the fall because they will have been injured on

the job, seriously injured, and tragically, in some cases, killed on the job.

There's nothing more important for us in this Legislature than to be able to ensure that we do everything we can. I believe that these tougher penalties, these tougher fines, will be a deterrent. We'll make sure that companies understand very clearly that they have a responsibility because many of these accidents are preventable. Many of these tragedies are preventable. Many have resulted from neglect. Many have resulted from somebody simply not bothering to do something they're supposed to do to protect the persons working for them.

I believe this legislation will send out a clear message and go a long way toward making Ontario a safer place, making it safe for working families, making it safe for people in Ontario. Men and women should be able to go to work in the morning, young people should be able to go to work in the morning, and believe that we're going to do everything we can to protect them so they come home in one piece at the end of the day. They can go back to their family, go back to their kids, take care of their family or kids. We owe nothing less to the people of Ontario. I hope you support that today.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'm pleased to rise this morning to speak on Bill 34, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act. I will be supporting this bill.

As Mr Agostino mentioned—and I wasn't aware of the personal tragedy in his family—when I was looking over the bill I thought of a number of examples that I've seen in the course of my life of people, family members and neighbours and friends, who have been seriously injured.

I think back to when I was very, very small. I had a cousin, a fellow by the name of Clarence Dunn. He went to work at the age of about 16. He was an eager young guy, got a job with a construction company and in his very first year, his very first summer, this piece of construction equipment, an earth mover, rolled on him. I think it was just basically his inexperience as an operator, but it killed him instantly and it was a tragedy for our whole family.

I had another cousin, a fellow by the name of Steve Yarnold, up in Orillia. He was fortunate. Steve was working in a brickyard, or making concrete blocks, one summer at the age of 16 and he got caught in the conveyor belt. He lost his leg as a result of that accident. It was many, many, many months of rehabilitation. He was a person who was very active as a hockey player, in baseball, football, all those types of things, and that put an end to all that in his life. It was, again, a tragedy for the community.

I can think back to another case of a construction project that was occurring not a quarter of a mile from where I live. A fellow by the name of Gord Perryman fell off the roof of what was to be a new marina. This is going back, as Mr Agostino said, 30 or 35 years, to that time. It killed Mr Perryman instantly. He left a wife, a

family of four. I can think of another example, of a neighbour, a fellow by the name of Brian Wood, who lost his life when a crane he was operating toppled over on him and killed him instantly.

We could go on and on. At first, you sort of forget where the tragedies were unless they affected you personally, affected your personal, immediate family, but when you get thinking about it, there are numerous accidents across our province and our country.

I relate a lot of those to inexperience. I understand that we need to train people better. I know there's going to be a lot of prevention, particularly put into young people as they get summer jobs.

I was at a construction site just the other day not too far from Mr Agostino's riding, at St Mark Catholic Elementary School in Stoney Creek. We did a sod-turning for a project that is already underway for that school board. It's a beautiful new school. I was so pleased to see the types of safety features the construction company was using on that project. All the necessary warnings were up. Although we still have accidents, I think we've come an awful long way in the prevention of accidents as well.

Our government realizes the importance of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. I think that in some cases where there's strict neglect there should be much heavier fines. I want to say, though, that this piece of legislation goes a long way to correcting that—maybe in some cases the same fines as the Environmental Protection Act. I'm not so sure we can equate the two issues and go with exactly the same penalties. However, I do think Mr Agostino has some good points to be considered here. I think we have to seriously consider looking at these points he brings up.

As well, I was interested to hear the Minister of Labour just a week ago in the House. He actually said it as though he was talking to the young people of Ontario. I thought it was important he noted that young people, if they think they're in jeopardy with safety around the workplace, should not start the job. He directed that in a specific way toward not only the people in this room, but toward the young people across the province.

I will be supporting this. I thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to say a few words.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** I'm very pleased the government member is supporting this initiative. I hope all members in this House will support this initiative because, let's face it, one life lost due to a preventable workplace accident is one too many. Certainly the individual situations that both the member from Hamilton East and the government member have related to clearly indicate how this kind of situation can affect a family, not just for a little while but for their entire lives.

I think what people ought to understand is that this is very important. We pride ourselves on workplace safety. What this measure is basically saying to employers out there is, "If you contravene the Occupational Health and Safety Act and you're convicted in a court, you will be fined up to \$100,000 or imprisoned for up to two years." That is really making a statement.

## 1020

I hope the government will take this to heart. I hope that if this passes here today it will not go into some black hole of the committee of the whole and disappear. The people of Ontario have to understand, as happened with the Oak Ridges moraine bill last week, that if something gets referred to the committee of the whole, the likelihood of that private member's bill or private member's initiative being passed and put into law is nil. If the government is serious about this, then they should take this initiative and immediately change the law, come back with a bill or give third reading to this bill and make it happen. Don't allow this situation to continue for any longer than necessary.

We can all talk beautiful language here about how we all want safe workplaces, but unless the government is actually willing to act on it and implement either this private member's bill or a bill of their own initiating the kind of fines structure the member from Hamilton East is proposing, nothing will happen.

Let me remind the people of Ontario of some of the things the Minister of Labour has said just recently. On April 26, he stated "that there is no more ... futile experience than reading about another preventable tragedy in the morning accident reports" and that "more needs to be done." This is a step in the right direction. Make employers more accountable and increase the fines structure. He goes on to say that "programs, pamphlets and information can only achieve so much." Only by increasing the penalties will you make it clear to the employers out there that it's absolutely incumbent on them to have the safest possible workplaces we can have. He goes on to say that "a consensus has emerged that workplace health and safety is far too important to be played with as a partisan tool or bargaining chip."

That's what the Minister of Labour said, so he can now take the lead in this and take the member for Hamilton East's private member's bill and make it happen. I am positive that if he were to indicate that we give this bill second and third reading in one session during the spring session, hopefully before we recess in June, then it will happen. There won't be any long debates and the people of Ontario, the workers of Ontario, will feel better about it and will feel more secure that the places of work they go to in the morning will be safer. With a significant increase in the fines structure and with the potential of imprisonment hanging over the head of the employers, they will do whatever it will take to make their workplaces safer.

Whereas we can mouth all the proper words, and undoubtedly there will be many complimentary words stated about this bill on all sides of the House, it is the government that can actually make it happen. I call upon the Minister of Labour: let's give this bill second and third reading as quickly as possible so that the workers of Ontario can get a greater sense of security and safety in their workplaces.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton):** I'm very pleased to speak on the bill this morning. I think

we have to give some background to where we are currently with occupational health and safety. Currently a person convicted of an offence can be fined up to \$25,000 or imprisoned up to 12 months or both. A "person" under the legislation can be a worker, can be a supervisor, can be a director of a corporation, can be an officer of a corporation. All those individuals are covered currently under the legislation. A corporation convicted of an offence can be fined up to \$500,000 per offence. That's what is currently out there.

I point out that section 32 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act requires directors and officers of a corporation to take all reasonable care to ensure that corporations comply with the act and its regulations, as well as with any orders of a Ministry of Labour inspector, director and the minister.

I suggest that is a very high standard; in fact that's a higher standard than what is being proposed by the member opposite when he talks about directors and officers of corporations being liable where they authorize, permit or acquiesce in an offence under the act. The standard right now is higher, "all reasonable care," and the way the act works, they're strict liability offences.

A recent court decision held that knowledge of the workplace problem that leads to the accident is not necessary to prove that the act was violated. In other words, the *actus reus*, the act that led to the legislation being violated, knowledge is not required. So this is strict liability under this legislation, and very tough legislation. I would note that these provisions I have spoken about have been in force since 1990. I believe the Liberal government was in power at that time and brought in these changes under, I would add, a lot of consultation. That's one thing that I don't really see here, there being very much consultation on this bill before it's even been brought in.

Now, the Ontario courts, I would note, have never levied the maximum individual fine or prison term or the maximum corporate fine. Most prosecutions are directed at corporations, where the \$500,000 limit applies, and not at individuals. In my experience, where an individual is named to be prosecuted, it's usually the supervisor that's added, very rarely the worker.

In recent years, the total amount collected in fines has increased by 113%, from \$2.4 million in 1995 to \$5.1 million in the year 2000. The amount collected per conviction is up 73%, from \$8,960 in 1995 to \$15,483 in the year 2000. I will say that the courts are much tougher with respect to meting out penalties today than they ever were, because there's a higher consciousness, as the member from Simcoe North has pointed out and as the member from Hamilton has also pointed out, in terms of this being a very serious issue, because it is.

I think we should look at other jurisdictions in terms of how they deal with it, but direct comparison with other jurisdictions is difficult. I would point out that the health and safety statutes in all other Canadian jurisdictions have significantly higher fines for individuals than Ontario; however, their maximum fine for corporations is

lower than in Ontario. Several other jurisdictions have higher maximum prison terms than Ontario: to point out a few, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, the federal government, and the Yukon Territory. However, direct comparison with other jurisdictions is difficult because health and safety statutes in most Canadian jurisdictions do not distinguish between individual and corporate penalties; Ontario, the Northwest Territories and Newfoundland do. And penalty provisions in several other jurisdictions allow for graduated fines for offences continuing for more than one day, higher fines for second offences, and in some cases higher fines where the offence is linked to a serious injury or death.

We have to keep in mind that when a company comes back, with respect to having been prosecuted one time, they're like any other individual who goes before the court. The judge knows that that individual corporation has a conviction on record and certainly the next time they are convicted that penalty they faced last time is going to be going up. But obviously it depends on the circumstances and the seriousness of the accident when you deal with the whole situation.

I recognize and certainly support the intent of what the member opposite is trying to accomplish. I think that it needs to be thought through a lot more. I don't think there was any real consultation with employer groups. To look at this as it is, especially with directors, I wouldn't want to lower the standard with respect to what we already have in the legislation. But this is really dealing with penalties in terms of increased fines and jail terms. The way the act is currently working has certainly been, I think, significant in terms of deterrence. Can we do better? We've got to try.

1030

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I stand in support of this private member's bill, and I want to thank the member from Hamilton East, Dominic Agostino, our labour critic, for his commitment to workers and to the working families of Ontario.

Certainly this is an opportunity for the government to say, "Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea culpa," because they have effectively destroyed the occupational health and safety clinics across this province over the course of the last six years, clinics that were working extremely well.

In fact, I remember the formation of them quite well. I remember flying from Toronto to Sudbury with Leo Gerard, the international president of the United Steelworkers of America, and him saying how these clinics came about. He walked into Premier David Peterson's office, during the Liberal government, and said, "David, we need this type of clinic because this type of clinic is going to save lives," and Peterson said, "No problem. Let's do it." Leo Gerard said they came to fruition and they were supported by the Liberal government in the late 1980s. Certainly they will be supported by the next Liberal government because we believe that workers and working families are the backbone of Ontario.

I'm very happy to say that on June 20 I will be going to the workers' memorial day service, which is hosted by

the Mine-Mill and the Canadian Auto Workers. That's a day when they recognize and remember all the workers who have lost their lives on the job, in particular the four who were killed in the rock burst. They pay massive tribute to the many workers who endure pain, suffering and early disabilities, as well as premature death, due to harsh environmental exposure and hazardous workplace conditions. They remember their sacrifices and their memory. Also, there is a hope at that event that the memory of these workers will instil a higher level of self-worth into all fellow workers and into government officials.

That's why I'm proud to stand in support of the member from Hamilton East and his bill, because that's what he is asking the government to do. He's asking the government to recommit some of the resources to occupational health and safety issues, because they are imperative.

I've long championed a workplace carcinoma committee to be instituted in this province. I've been given lip service from the former Minister of Health and the present labour minister. The new Minister of Health hasn't responded. It is imperative that these types of initiatives take place.

I also want to talk this morning because I believe education is very important in the workplace. That's why I commend my colleague Mike Gravelle on his initiative. I also commend the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, which will be instituting a program that's called Size Does Matter. It's called the PAVE program. The PAVE program is designed to educate the workers, the membership, about what they can do about anti-worker legislation. PAVE won't endorse one political party; they will endorse candidates who believe that occupational health and safety is extremely important. There is strength in numbers and I believe that PAVE will in fact pave the way to a better future. It is a political action voter education program that I believe is imperative for all workers in Ontario to become involved in.

In summation, I want to say that the member from Hamilton East, a worker for workers as our labour critic, understands from personal example the importance of this type of legislation. I encourage this House to support it. I encourage the government to then act on it and try for once to get the message to workers that you care about them.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** New Democrats are going to support this amendment. Look at the facts. The figures are right here. Workers, women and men in our workplaces—*injuries and illnesses are on the increase once again*. Deaths, occupational fatality claims, workers' deaths as a result of the workplace, illness and accident, are on the increase once again. It's no surprise to anybody out there in any community in any part of this province why that's the case: this government's attack on working people; this government's attack on working women and men; this government's attack on the trade union movement; this government's wholehearted support for that global corporate agenda, that agenda that

has as its goal the reduction of workers' wages, that has as its goal the elimination of any worker control over their workplace, including their own health and safety; this government that has as its goal service far beyond mere lip service—true, genuine, devoted service—to the corporate agenda of profits at any price, especially if that price is going to be paid by working women and men.

This isn't just about statistics; it's about real people. It's about young Jeffrey Fleeton, a 17-year-old kid, just finished grade 12. On June 14 last year, he was working with his dad's surveying company. The family's from up around the Brampton area. He was working down in the Oakville area, wearing his red vest, doing all things workers do. A 17-year-old kid was struck dead by an illegally loaded lumber truck; struck down, killed, slaughtered by that oversized load. What happens to the perpetrator of that crime that takes a 17-year-old boy's life here in the province of Ontario? This government that talks about how it's going to make our streets safer was going to pull the charge against that trucking company in exchange for a \$2,000 charitable contribution. That's what it was going to do until it was raised here in this Legislature and this government was forced—embarrassed and then compelled—to instruct its Attorney General to make a phone call down to the staff person in the Milton office and tell that doughhead that you don't trade off young workers' lives for a \$2,000 charitable contribution.

I take some great offence at some obscure Tory backbencher standing up here and lecturing us about absolute liability. He has the gall to suggest there should be more consultation with the corporate bosses. He doesn't tell this assembly that he earns a pretty substantial second living—a little bit of a double-dipper, if you will—by practising law representing those same corporate bosses. I take some great offence at Tory backbenchers lecturing anybody when they are the authors of a policy that would have traded off the life of a bright, capable, young 17-year-old kid for a crummy \$2,000 contribution—no trial, no conviction, charges withdrawn. Obscene. Were it not for us raising that in this Legislature, it would have happened, and we're proud to have been able to bring that to the forefront.

But we also know we're not going to find out about every instance where this government is prepared to serve its corporate bosses at any cost to working women and men in the province of Ontario. Let's talk for a moment about young Robyn Lafleur down in Niagara. I knew her; I know her mother. I have to say I knew her, because she died in November 1999. She died when the small plant she was working in manufacturing fire-crackers down in Port Robinson—I know the turf well—exploded. She lay under the hot, charred, burning beam of that roof, dying while rescue workers were frustrated in their attempt to get to her. When they did get to her, it was to no avail.

1040

I've stood with Robyn's mother every year since, Joanne Stubbins, who clutches her daughter's portrait to

her chest and still cries and can still produce tears from all those who are with her, Robyn's friends and her co-workers and the biggest, toughest trade union types you ever saw shedding tears for Robyn Lafleur, a sister whose life was robbed from her and for whom justice is not only delayed but increasingly close to being denied because this government is in the course, it appears, of screwing up the prosecution of the charges against the company that took Robyn's life. Judge Morrison down in Provincial Court there just last week warned the crown attorneys—the problem is it's both federal crowns and provincial crowns—that the matter is becoming unduly delayed. The judge left the clear impression that if the prosecution doesn't get its act together, they may well find themselves with little to prosecute.

These are real people. And what have we got in Mike Harris's Ontario? We've got an increase in workplace deaths. We've got an increase in workplace illness and injury. Increases—it's 2001, not 1901. We have reduced support for workers who want to engage in some sort of control over the workplace. We have an attack on the programs that workers have been participating in to educate them about workplace safety and workplace toxins, and it's going to get worse.

Please, don't think for a minute that 60-hour work-weeks and 12-hour workdays aren't going to directly contribute to yet even further increases in workplace death and illness. Don't think for a minute that this government's direct attack on the trade union movement and on trade unionists, their leaders and their democratic, grassroots corporate bodies, isn't going to have a direct result once again on the numbers of workers who die in the workplace, who are injured in the workplace and who suffer diseases as a result of exposures in the workplace.

The trade union movement has been at the forefront of that struggle. That's why this government doesn't like trade unions. That's why this government and its back-benchers, as obscure as they are, will take every opportunity to try to paint as vile a picture, as distorted and dishonest and evil a picture, as malicious and false a picture, as they can of what the trade union movement is in this country, or even internationally, and who the people are who are activists in those trade unions who are providing leadership for those trade unions—yes, those very democratic collective bodies of workers, women and men, who stand in solidarity to bargain and to enjoy some better share of the wealth they create.

You see, there's more wealth being created in this province now than ever before. There's simply no denial of it. There's, similarly, no denial of the fact that with this government's direct assistance, with the very specific fiscal policies of this government, that wealth is increasingly concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer people; and increasingly in the hands of people who don't even reside in Ontario, never mind Canada.

The problem isn't just the level of fines. We're going to support the bill. We're going to support the amendments. The fines should be increased because judges perpetually never give the maximum fine. They're

guided by what the maximum fine is, and if they go halfway up, to increase the fines is going to give judges a little more leeway in terms of the amount of fines they can impose. But the reality is that people should be going to jail. And I'm not talking about supervisors and managers; I'm talking about corporate directors. If you really want to put some teeth into legislation that's going to make workplaces safer for workers, you start sending corporate directors, those guys in their \$1,000 or \$1,500 pinstripe suits, with their little Gucci shoes and their Montblanc pens, to jail. Let them do some hard time.

The other reality is that the most effective deterrent when it comes to effecting and facilitating compliance with occupational health and safety legislation is enforcement. The likelihood of being caught—enforcement. Not the kind of enforcement that Mike Harris's Attorney General—what's his name, a Mr Young—would engage in. Mr Young was prepared to withdraw the charge against the corporate owner of a truck that took the life of a 17-year-old boy and then let that same corporate body enjoy a tax break, because it would give \$2,000 donation to a charity and get the tax receipt. Hell, the company might have come out ahead and that boy would still be dead.

Those same policies are the ones that, with a wink and a nod and the occasional nudge, and perhaps the less-than-infrequent exchange, however sotto voce, on the golf course—do you understand where I'm coming from? Corporate owners are getting the message from this government that they, the corporate bosses, can just run roughshod over workers' health and safety rights. We know that the lowest-paid workers in this province, the ones working for minimum wage, and many of them because of bosses who are going to try to weave and bob their way through weakened Employment Standards Act legislation, those lowest-paid workers, the poorest workers in this province, those making \$6.85 an hour, are given short shrift by this government. This government won't even consider the most modest of wage increases for the poorest workers in this province, and the number of those poorest workers is increasing daily as more and more jobs are being transferred—metamorphosized—from value production manufacturing jobs down to the service sector, minimum-wage jobs, the Tim Hortons, the McDonald's, the Burger Kings, what have you. The number of workers who are working poor in this province has increased dramatically during the six years that Mike Harris and the Tories have been at the helm here at Queen's Park.

It's about enforcement. As long as this government is going to turn a blind eye to violations, good grief, the highest fines in the world aren't going to be a deterrent, because the likelihood of getting caught simply ain't there. The bottom line is that the New Democrats in Parliament, with the direct aid of the United Steelworkers union here in this country, have been fighting—and I encourage people who are inclined to support this bill today to join Alexa McDonough and federal New Democrats in their campaign in Ottawa—to have health and

safety violations as a part of the Criminal Code of Canada. If you're really serious about protecting workers—women and men, our sisters and brothers, our parents, our kids—if you're really serious about it and you really want to make it happen, by God, you make it a criminal offence for corporations—I don't care where their head office is—to murder workers or to make them sick or to take their futures away from them or to poison them, as is happening to workers daily, hundreds of workers annually here in this province. They're being poisoned. Thousands are succumbing to workplace accident and illness. Hundreds die on an annual basis. In the year 2001, the numbers are getting higher.

This government could care less about working women and men. This government's demonstrated that on a daily basis, and when its obscure little backbenchers stand up here today and try to weave and bob their way through this debate, they become oh so transparent. It's not just disdain for workers, it's an actual dislike, from some of them a hatred, for working women and men, rolling us back into the previous century.

**1050**

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I am pleased to rise to speak on Bill 34. The member for Hamilton East has brought this in. To let him know, I'm supporting this particular bill. I am getting just a little nervous when I'm supporting a Liberal's bill. Last evening I was complimented by a Liberal and even a bit of applause came from the Liberal side when I spoke, so I'm beginning to think maybe I'm doing something wrong here.

This is indeed a non-partisan bill, brought forward by the member for Hamilton East in a non-partisan way. It's all about, as I see it, the change of behaviour. Sometimes we can do it with a carrot; sometimes we can do it with a stick. In the case of penalties, of course, we're talking about doing it with a stick, but I'd like to think that this is about prevention, not necessarily about the fines or the jail terms that are levied later on. The fact that they can be to that extreme will make employers, other workers, directors and corporations be more safety-conscious when they're faced with various costs to put up something like the member mentioned, a wooden barrier around an elevator shaft. I had heard that his father had been injured in an accident something like that. He presented that very, very well here this morning, talking about a non-protected elevator shaft and how it changed their family. Not having walked in his shoes, I can't really fully appreciate that, but I can have some understanding of the difficulties the family must have had as a result of that particular accident.

It would strike me that these penalties are realistic. I understand that some 10 years ago they were debated, with a lot of consultation. I appreciate the comment made about consultation. I hope the member would want that kind of consultation to occur.

I think it's interesting just to look at some of the numbers. I heard the member for Niagara Centre going on and on. I look at the figures, and they have continued to rise. I have figures from 1997 to 1999 on injury and

illness. It's not a marked increase but a steady increase. Really, it should be going down, and it's unfortunate it is climbing. When I look at the number of deaths, I think it's rather interesting to see how it actually climbed very significantly through the early 1990s. The first real drop was in 1996, a further drop in 1997, and then we see it starting to work its way back up again. I would dearly like to see that trend reversing. I think by setting penalties to make employers, other workers, and boards of directors sit up and take notice, that kind of behaviour will change.

I just see a bit of a relationship between this bill and the one that I'll be bringing in after 11 o'clock. That's all about changing the behaviour of how people act.

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** I want to congratulate the member from Hamilton East for bringing in this bill that's going to bring in some penalties for individuals and corporations that contravene the act, and make the directors and officers of the corporation liable.

I believe this bill is not about blame as much as it is about responsibility. I don't agree with all of the comments of the member from Niagara Centre. You don't want to vilify corporations, but corporations have a responsibility. This type of bill, in my view, ensures that those who have decision-making powers in corporations ensure that the highest level of safety is in the workplace under their direction.

Some 40% of chemicals produced in Canada are produced in Sarnia-Lambton. We have a tremendous history of ill effects on workers throughout the last 50 years. I would suggest that we have a lot to learn from not only the incidents there but the incidents that were so eloquently portrayed by the member for Hamilton East about his own father. I think it's important that we learn and try to change the system so that we ensure that responsibility is taken by those people who actually make the decisions. After all, it is at that level that we are going to ensure that the environment of the workplace has the best safety regulations. We can put all the rules in place that we want, but if there isn't a consequence to the breaking of those rules, unfortunately human nature is such that they will cut corners when they have to.

I have to say that I've had various meetings with corporations locally. I understand that, for the most part, there are good corporate citizens who understand that part of their responsibility is to ensure that their workers have the safest environment to work in. It's encouraging for me to note that the good corporate citizens also say that sometimes there isn't enough of a hammer for those people who, because of their moral obligations, aren't abiding and aren't making their workplace safe.

We had a huge benzene spill in Sarnia about six months ago, a million litres of benzene. Workers had to work in that, and there were a lot of people exposed to this. I'm always concerned when you understand that this is a cancer-causing substance. Yet the company consistently wants to do, if you want to call it, damage control. I believe we have to come to a time where the corporations, the community and political leaders have to work

together to make sure we have the safest workplace, because it's too high a price for the company to pay and it's too high a price for the community to pay. I believe the political will has to be there to ensure that the rules of occupational safety and health have consequences that come with them.

I have to say that I believe the imbalance of the Conservative government is that it has allowed all of this self-policing to be part and parcel of their ideology. I believe that does not help when you have corporate citizens who don't take responsibility for their workers in the workplace. I know that we are certainly committed to ensuring that we do have liability of the directors and officers who are not meeting their responsibility.

Again, this bill is not about blame, but it is about ensuring responsibility.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In response, the member for Hamilton East.

**Mr Agostino:** I want to thank my colleagues on all sides of the House who have spoken. I appreciate their kind support and their kind words toward the bill. My colleague from St Paul's, Michael Bryant, has worked with me on this issue, and many of his conscientious constituents from St Paul's and cases brought to my attention have helped bring this together.

I clearly want to work with the government on this. If there are changes to be made or parts of the bill that need to be somewhat fixed, I extend an offer to the Minister of Labour, to members of the government side that are interested in this: I want to work with you. I want to put together the best piece of legislation and protect workers across Ontario. We owe it to every single worker today in the workforce, we owe it to every single woman and man that has been killed or injured in the workplace. But let me point out to you, Mr Speaker, we owe it most of all to those young people, the pages who are sitting in front of you. Those young men and women will be out in the workforce in the next few years as summer students, earning a few extra dollars to go to school.

Let me remind this House again that we owe it to the memory of Dave Ellis, an 18-year-old killed on the job, trying to make money to go to school in the fall. We owe it to the memory of 17-year-old Jeffrey Fleeton, killed on the job earning money to go back to school. Those young people were 18, 17.

I want to point something out. In the west members' gallery my co-op student is here: Sean Neuman. Sean is 18 years old. He is the age of those two young people I just mentioned, the age of his friends. That puts, I believe, a real human face—those young folks sitting in front of us, the young man sitting in the west members' gallery—on why this is important. It is important for people in the workforce today, for everyone. As we go into the summer, as we start summer employment, young people are going to be out there. We owe this protection to young Ontarians every single day of the week.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This completes the time allocated for debate on this matter. I will place the question to decide this matter at 12 noon.

1100

## HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (OUTSIDE RIDERS), 2001

### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (PASSENGERS À L'EXTÉRIEUR D'UN VÉHICULE)

Mr Galt moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 33, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit persons from riding on the outside of a motor vehicle / Projet de loi 33, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour interdire à des personnes de circuler à l'extérieur d'un véhicule automobile.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** The member has up to 10 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** First, I'd like to introduce the Lawrence family and the Mackey family, parents of Jason and Bartley, who were killed this past summer in a traffic accident. Please welcome them.

I certainly appreciate them being with us. They've been a driving force behind this legislation. I commend them on their public-spiritedness, their desire to change a small part of our world, to make it a safer place for our young people, or for that matter, anyone who's going to ride on the outside of a vehicle.

This bill is similar to the previous one in that it is trying to change the behaviour and the actions of people and how they deal with vehicles and ride on them.

They know only too well the pain of losing a child so tragically. I've had the experience of the phone ringing some four times, generally in the middle of the night. It was the police on the other end. One of our daughters had been in an accident. It wasn't a death, but I had just a little feeling of what they must have gone through when they had the phone call or the arrival of the policemen at their door. How many times have we seen our own teenagers and others just like them in a similar circumstance, riding in the box of a half-ton truck? Certainly this legislation can prevent similar deaths by changing that kind of behaviour.

We are not the first in Canada to put forth a law to prevent people from riding on the outside of vehicles. This is in place in several other jurisdictions across Canada; at least five have this type of legislation to prevent outside riders on vehicles. We've reviewed that legislation. We find that a simple change to our own transportation act would accommodate and prevent people—at least prevent them legally—from riding on the outside of a vehicle. In general, it prohibits anyone from riding in the cargo bed of a pickup truck or on the outside of a vehicle not designed for outside riders.

Of course motorcycles and fire trucks would be exempt. We are also looking at exemptions for people engaged in agricultural work, horticultural work, road construction and municipal work. The initial suggestion we have in the bill—we are looking at some flexibility as

we move into hearings—is that we've put in the bill that it's provided that the vehicle is not travelling over 60 kilometres per hour when involved in that kind of work and has people in the box of a truck. I'm very flexible when we go to committee with this as to what that speed should be.

We should also be looking at, what about parade vehicles? Certainly that is a very different kind of speed. I suggest probably that could be dealt with in regulations. Nonetheless the bill gives the Lieutenant Governor the legal right to regulation to make other exemptions as appropriate.

As mentioned, this is a non-partisan bill. We all share the concerns that the presence of Bart's and Jay's parents signifies here today. This bill seems to have broad support here in the Legislature. I'm getting an awful lot of support in my own riding as well. Just to name some from whom I'm getting support: the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Brad Clark; his parliamentary assistant, Julia Munro; David Leonhardt of the Canadian Automobile Association; and John Svensson from the Driving School Association of Ontario.

We've received absolutely overwhelming support in the local press at home—I don't normally get this kind of supportive press—and a lot of positive editorials. All the articles are very positive on this bill, and I've received almost nil negative concerns about it. Basically I've already mentioned that some people think 60 kilometres per hour for agriculture and construction work, that kind of thing, is maybe too fast. We can certainly have a look at that. Also, in Hamilton township, there's a young man, a grade 7 student at Dale Road public school, who on his own steam and of his own accord took up a petition in favour of this type of legislation shortly after the accident. This too is an inspiration.

More compelling still is this letter written to me by the girlfriend of one of the young men. She should become a writer.

"Recently I gave a speech to my fellow classmates on the danger of riding in the back of a pickup truck. In the opening of my speech, I asked my audience a couple of general questions regarding the topic. In my first question, I asked them to raise their hands if they thought it was illegal to ride in a moving vehicle without a seat belt. The entire audience raised their hand in agreement. In my second question, I asked them to raise their hands if they thought it was illegal to ride in the back of a pickup truck. The entire class sat with a puzzled look on their faces and half the class raised their hands with an unsure glance to the front of the class, where I was speaking.

"In disbelief of the lack of awareness surrounding this issue, I continued on with my speech presenting to them the dangers of riding in the back of a truck and the repercussions that can follow. Since I was the 15th speaker of the day, the attention span of the class was running thin. But in the last few minutes of my presentation I shared my personal story with my class, which immediately changed their level of interest. As I was speaking, their

eyes were wide with interest in my topic. I asked my class who had ridden in the back of a pickup truck before. Nearly the entire class raised their hands. I lowered my voice and pleaded to my classmates, 'After I share my tragic experience to you, I pray no one in this class will ever ride in the back of a truck ever again.'

"On July 30, 2000, my world came crashing down when my boyfriend, Jason Lawrence was instantly killed when he was ejected from the back of a pickup truck. Jason and I lived an incredible life together and had planned every minute of our future together. Little did I know on July 29, as I sat waiting for him to get home, he would never return. The accident also involved two other friends riding in the back of the truck, Bartley Mackey, who was also killed instantly and Robert Toddish, who suffered serious head injuries.

"I did not share this story with my class or write this letter for sympathy, but simply because I feel this issue needs to be addressed immediately. After receiving the only perfect mark in my class for my presentation, and noticing the level of interest I obtained after I concluded my speech, I found comfort in believing I had changed the beliefs of so many impressionable people. Simply because I find it so hard to justify why it is illegal to ride in a closed vehicle without restraint, but it is legal to ride in an open vehicle without any restraint. I cannot think of a single logical reason why this has never become a law.

"I am hoping that this letter may make even a few people sit back and realize that something needs to be done to prevent anything similar to this from happening in the future. I have witnessed the horrible grief that has surrounded all the friends and family of these young men. A law surrounding riding in the back of a truck can prevent accidents like this in the future, and the pain and grief that follows tragedies. In conclusion, please take my words seriously and make it illegal to ride in the back of a truck. This law will make anyone who chooses to ride in the back of a truck to think twice about their decisions, because laws are made for reasons. I truly believe that my story is reason enough."

That was signed by Jennifer Shepherd.

In conclusion, I believe that this is indeed good legislation and it's, you might say, emotional legislation, particularly from this letter. It's been said that of all the duties of government its most important responsibility is to keep its citizens safe, and we're certainly discussing that considerably this morning with both bills. This particular bill, if enacted and passed, will certainly change that.

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Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death among our young people, and with some of the aggressive driving we're seeing today, I don't think there's any question that's increasing. Anything that we can do about aggressive driving or people riding in the back of half-ton trucks would certainly help. To help prevent these deaths we require seat belts within the protection of a cab, but to allow people to ride unrestrained on the outside is indeed a contradiction. Such a simple precaution, but one that is

so obviously needed, needs to be publicized and needs to be enforced.

On behalf of our young people, on behalf of a certain young man and all his supporters in Hamilton township, on behalf of the girlfriend, the Mackeys and the Lawrences, and especially on behalf of their sons, Bart and Jay, I ask you to support this legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** First of all, let me express, on behalf of all my Liberal colleagues, our sincere condolences to the family members who are here with us today and to your extended family.

This bill has a bit of a history. The member opposite introduced a similar bill in December 2000. In this place we've come to lately understand that we don't sit very often. We came back to this House a month later than normal. The government, when it made its decisions, could have decided to keep this bill alive last December. The government chose not to do that. The member opposite had to go through the lottery that we have here that provides each member with an opportunity to bring a bill forward. He's very fortunate that his is very early in the legislative calendar. Others of us must wait until fall, or perhaps wait and never have our bills heard in this place. So we came back late and the government didn't hold this bill over from last year. But now we are at this point. I wonder if the government supports the bill, in the fact that it didn't hold this very worthwhile piece of legislation and amendment to the Highway Traffic Act over and had the member opposite go into another lottery situation which would have only delayed passage of the bill. The member, as I say, is very fortunate.

I too have had a bill that has had a history in this place in terms of protecting the youth of our province, an amendment to the Highway Traffic Act. I brought it to this House in the memory of Ryan Marcuzzi, the 16-year-old daughter of Colleen and Larry Marcuzzi, and as well I had supporters like Ginny and Ed Loxton who also lost a child because someone passed a school bus illegally. I introduced legislation into this House, backed by a petition with 30,000 names on it encouraging me to do so, support from police, school bus drivers, school bus operators, municipalities, school boards, teachers, parents and students. I continue to get letters on this piece of legislation that I first introduced in 1996. I have been trying to introduce a bill that would provide for vehicle liability and the opportunity to have a real conviction mechanism for people who pass school buses when the red lights are flashing and young people are getting on or off that bus. Since 1996 I have been working with a host of people trying to impress upon this government to pass that legislation.

Yes, in November 1996 the bill received the unanimous support of this House and was referred to the standing committee on resources development. For over a year we tried to get that bill into the committee and it didn't happen. The government held that bill back. They stalled. They made all manner of excuses. Unfortunately,

just as the member opposite's bill died in December 2000, that Bill 78 died as well.

In memory of Ryan Marcuzzi and other children who have died in this province, some 13 in the last 13 years, and on behalf of the 810,000 children who ride school buses every day, and on behalf of the bus drivers who drive 16,000 buses in this province, I reintroduced the bill. I introduced it again, a third time, and I introduced it a fourth time. On November 16, 2000, the bill received second reading in this House. It was referred to the committee of the whole. We who work in this place know that the opportunity for that bill to ever be heard in the committee of the whole is highly unlikely. For the fourth time, the government let that bill die once again.

I hope the member opposite has a better opportunity. He says he wants his bill to go into committee. I welcome that opportunity. He wants to discuss other issues within the bill and expand on them. We would welcome that. I hope the member opposite has much more success at protecting the lives of people who ride in the back of vehicles, and he specifically mentioned pickup trucks, than I have had trying to protect children who far too often are subjected to people who pass buses illegally when the red lights are flashing.

Bus drivers have told me that this can happen two, three, four times a week. I have had television stations send me film of people passing school buses when the red lights are flashing—not just one car, which might be dangerous enough, but the second car and the third car. I've had parents send me film they have taken of automobiles and all manner of transportation, trucks etc., passing school buses when the red lights are flashing. It happens far too often and we do not have a conviction mechanism.

The government says they are opposed to vehicle liability. However, the government allows for cameras to take pictures of vehicles on the 407 so that a private operator can collect money. I have here a bill with vehicle liability provided by an eyewitness account, that being the school bus driver, who will state the licence number and other identifying marks of a vehicle if need be, and the government won't accept that. But they will allow for vehicle liability to collect money on a toll road.

Furthermore, the government has allowed for the use of red light cameras. If it's all right for red light cameras, to use vehicle liability in that instance, why is it wrong to have someone's eyewitness account not be provided for, with the four bills I've introduced, all similar? I don't understand it. The public doesn't understand it. The parents don't understand it. Colleen and Larry Marcuzzi don't understand it. Ginny and Ed Loxton don't understand it. The 30,000 people who signed that petition and the letters I continue to get, since 1996, don't understand the government's view either.

I hope the member opposite has more success at going through the committee stages, is not put off for a year trying to get his bill into committee, to then subsequently see it die. Having the bill die on the order paper four

times, but undaunted, I will bring the bill back to this House again.

I agree with the member opposite who mentioned the 60 kilometres per hour within his bill. I think we should look at that. That's what committees are for, to discuss. I have had some conversations with others who rather question why 60 kilometres per hour, but we can discuss that in committee, just as the government, which had questions about my bill, could have discussed it in committee, but they won't let it go there. Oh yes, they said committee of the whole. As I stated, we know that is unlikely to ever happen in this House. So we'll try again. We will be persistent in order to protect the 810,000 children who ride school buses daily, who all too frequently see careless motorists pass by.

Currently, the bus driver must identify the person driving, physically identify them. First of all, the bus driver's responsibility is to the children and watching them.

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**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I hate to do this in private members' business. There is a standing order that requires us to speak to the bill, the matter before us, and this member, unfortunately, has wasted a lot of his own time talking about his own previous bill. Bus safety is a very important subject but not when we're discussing trucks.

**The Deputy Speaker:** As members would know, they have to direct their comments to the legislation before us. Members should also know that in private members' hour there is a relatively large amount of latitude, given that these speeches are timed. Member for Chatham-Kent Essex.

**Mr Hoy:** Well, I'm sorry if this school bus bill annoys the government members opposite.

What I have characterized here for you is how private members' bills can be halted in this House. Four times, the government opposite has halted this bill from even going to the committee. You wouldn't allow it to go to the committee for over a year. I tried to get that bill into committee—all manner of excuses from the government. All manner of—

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]):** Are you in favour of this bill or not?

**Mr Hoy:** I would welcome the opportunity, as the member has asked, that his bill be referred to the committee. I agree with that. But why we have this notion that other bills to protect people with amendments to the Highway Traffic Act cannot be heard—since 1996 to this date thus far—is a question I put before the Legislature.

But certainly we would welcome the opportunity to have this bill from the member opposite to go to committee and I welcome the opportunity to speak about it at that time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I want to say, right from the beginning, that our caucus, the NDP

caucus, will be supporting this legislation. We believe it's a step in the right direction. We believe that yes, the bill needs to go to committee. I hope the government doesn't kill the bill's opportunity to get to committee because there are a couple of technical issues, as the member well knows, that need to be dealt with, I believe, at the committee level. I know in discussions I've had with people within the Canadian Automobile Association and others, there are a few concerns around speed and other issues that we have to deal with. Where to do that is not particularly in this debate but at the committee level.

So I want to say right at the beginning we support the bill. New Democrats will vote in favour. We will do what we can to assist the member to get this bill through the committee process so that we're able to deal with the issue, and then hopefully bring the bill back to third reading, give it final assent before we're out of here this spring so that this bill actually can become law.

However, I'm not very optimistic that that's going to happen, not because the member opposite doesn't want it to happen. We know the member and I are on opposite sides of a number of issues. We have ideologies that are somewhat different, I guess we would say. But on this particular issue—as most members know, as we present bills at private members' hour, these are non-partisan issues. These are up and down issues. This is about safety, this is about protecting lives, and there's no ideology when it comes to those issues. It's a question of technicalities only.

But I'm not optimistic that the bill is going to get far. Far too often, I think we need to understand, not only us as members but for those of you watching—private members' hour is probably one of the better places where members are able to bring bills to be discussed in this Legislature, issues that they feel strongly about as members or issues that their constituents feel strongly about and need to have debated and passed into law. Far too often, in 99% of cases, members bring together really good bills that are in my view up and down, non-partisan. They're really about doing good things in our communities or good things for Ontario from all sides of the House. But unfortunately, because of the system of democratic government that we have in our British parliamentary system, the bills don't get anywhere. At the end of the day, if the government of the day—and I don't care if it's Conservative, Liberal or New Democrat; we're all guilty of this, every party—says, "I have more important business to tend to. I want to deal with my government business," they don't give opportunity for private members' bills to work their way through the legislative process. This is not something that's just true of the Conservative government today. This was true of Liberals under David Peterson and certainly was true under Bob Rae when I was a member of that government.

If I've learned one thing coming through the legislative process, being a member now for my third term, it is that this system does not work. Our system of British parliamentary democracy, in my view, serves the person in the Premier's office and hardly anybody else. I don't

care if it's Bob Rae, Mike Harris or David Peterson—they're all equally guilty. Because all of the power is concentrated in their hands, they get to decide everything. Backbenchers in the government have a hard time trying to pass their bills through the House, as we will find with Mr Galt's bill. Opposition members equally have the same problem because the government of the day says, through the Premier's office, "Here are our priorities. What matters are our priorities as the Premier of Ontario and to heck with anybody else in this Legislature. It don't matter because, na, na, na, na, I've got more seats than you."

It's a terrible disservice to the public of Ontario, and I think it's a terrible disservice, quite frankly, to democracy. That's why as a member you will see me stand up in this House more often than not and start talking about how we need to reform our parliamentary system. It's a system that was based on a principle of what democracy was seen as 300 years ago when it was brought to be in England. It was basically designed with what were the issues of those days and what they thought might work in a British parliamentary system that had to do with how we pass legislation through the House.

But in a modern democracy, in a new millennium, in the year 2001, you would think we would have evolved our system to the point that a member can walk into the House, as Mr Galt did today, introduce a bill that's important to him, important to his constituency and certainly important to the people the bill affects, and we would at least want as citizens of this province the ability to know that Mr Galt's bill, the member from Northumberland's bill, would be able to get some kind of passage through this House, so that at the end of the day we can get some justice for people who have unfortunately died in these kinds of situations and, more importantly, try to save lives in the future. But because of our British parliamentary system the majority government of the day will say, "No, we're dealing with government business and to heck with all those other private members' bills."

As a case in point, the member from Northumberland himself, in the previous session, brought to this House Bill 173, which got second reading approval at private members' hour. It was supported by all parties. Why would a bill such as this, that was supported by all parties, not have gotten speedy passage through the House and the committee process? Because this system stinks, quite bluntly. Our democratic system is not well. It's broken and it needs to be fixed. I say what we need to do as parliamentarians on all sides of the House is to start talking to the citizens of this province about how we reform our parliamentary democracy so that when they look in this chamber, they have a little bit more confidence that, first, when they look inside they see themselves and, more importantly, they have confidence that the work we do in this Legislature at the end is going to be able to at least benefit them as citizens of this province and not just the government. Again, it's not just New Democrats, Conservatives and Liberals—we're all guilty—but I say we need to undergo a very rude

awakening in this province when it comes to reforming our democracy.

I would suggest, by example, that we could look at what has happened in other parliamentary democracies around the world. What's wrong with looking at what happens, for example, in a system of proportional representation? Under a PR system, what's called proportional representation, you have an election, just as we have now. You can design a system that's made for Ontario which respects that we should have members in constituencies, which respects that we have some stability in the system, so that we know we don't have what people call an Italian pizza-type Parliament where governments are overthrown every six months, that we can actually design a system that says that if Mike Harris in the last election got 44% or 45% of the vote, his number of seats in the House should be no more than that percentage. At least in that way the government's got to work with the other two parties in order to pass legislation through the House.

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What that means to you who are sitting in the gallery wanting this bill to pass is that we would actually be able to do that because Mr Harris would have to listen to Mr Galt. He would have some power inside in his own caucus because Harris, in wanting to pass his legislation, would say, "Doug, I need your support," and Doug would say, "Mike, if you want my support, help me with my bill," and we on this side of the House would be able to do the same. Yes, the system might be a little bit slower when it comes to debating bills, but why should we be passing bills in this House in three days' time without proper debate, without proper scrutiny by the public, so that in the end the government can get its way? Again, I don't care who the Premier is—we're all guilty.

I say we need to engage in a process of democratic reform in this province where we say what the stated principles are that we want. We want stability in our government, we want to make sure the government reflects us as citizens and that when they look inside this Parliament they've got some confidence. We're big enough in Ontario, intelligent enough and certainly have a strong enough tradition of democracy that we can undertake a process of looking at how we could move our system past the system we've got now, called "first past the post," and look at a PR system.

I would not argue that we follow a German model. I would not argue that we follow an Italian, New Zealand or Israeli model. I think those work or don't work for their particular situation. Ontario has to design its own. I think some of the principles would be that we need to elect members who represent constituencies. We need to make sure there's proportionality in the House. If the New Democrats, in 1990, got 38% of the vote, we should have had no more than 38% of the seats in the House. If Conservatives got 45% in the last election, Conservatives should have no more than 45% of the seats in the House. At least in that way there's a taking into account of the various points of view and there has to be some work and some co-operation between the parties in this House.

At least that way the citizen would feel their vote counts. If they vote in Northumberland, or they vote in Timmins-James Bay, and, whoever they vote for, be it a Conservative, a New Democrat or a Liberal, win or lose, as far as whether your member is elected, at least you know your vote counted to get the proportion of members in the House of the party you believe would do the best job. That way at least we'd be able to get into having some rational debate around this place about how we move things through the House.

I'll give you a very good example. There's a huge debate now that's happening in this Legislature around funding private schools. The government is in favour of it. I understand that. I have no argument with the government's belief. They believe in that. It's their right as individuals and their right as a party to propose whatever, but they got 45% of the seats in this House and they're going to come now and they're going to totally change public education in this House by virtue of 45% of the seats.

That, to me, in a democracy is preposterous. Under a PR system there would be at least a taking into account of the various views. The Liberals would have to make up their minds which side of the issue they're on because one day they support and the next day they don't. At least we'd be able to firm them up on their position. We know where New Democrats are coming from: we're opposing it. At least we're consistent on that. But at the end of the day there would have to be at least a majority of members in this House who agree that we should or should not fund private education by way of a voucher system. But now, because the government got 45% of the vote in the last general election and, because of "first past the post," has over 60% of the seats, they can do what they want and there's nothing you can do, Mr and Mrs Public. You can't talk to your member from Northumberland. He's got to do what his government wants. I was a member of the government; I know how it works. I've been on both sides of the House.

We need to look at democratic reform so that when citizens go to their MPPs and say, "I have an issue that's important and I want that issue debated in the Legislature," when their MPP says, "Yes, I will be the champion," as Mr Galt has done, rightfully so—and I agree with him on this issue; he's 100% right and I want his bill to pass—at least the citizens from Northumberland, when they look at their MPP, would say, "I know if my member champions my issue, it really does mean something. It means in the end there's a chance the bill will pass." You know what? That means democracy might work for a change, because it certainly doesn't work in this.

The government on the other side will argue against me because they're the majority government today. It's to their benefit not to have a PR system and to have "first past the post." Do you know what? That's how most governments will argue. I'm stating right at the outset that we need to have this debate and that it has to be done, in my view, in such a way that the decision is not

made by the politicians, but that the decision is made by you. "Do you believe the current system works, yes or no?" If the answer is no, then let's engage in a process on how we change it. Do you know what? Put that decision in the hands of the public, not in the hands of the politicians, because quite frankly most of us can't be trusted on this issue by way of history in this place.

As we go through this debate, I think what would come out would be interesting. But I'm fairly certain that if we're able, as a Legislature, to deal with an all-party committee where the public would have some say and an ability to have some confidence in what we're doing, they would at least feel, at the end of the day, that when we change the system they're better able to say, "When I look at the Legislature, I feel a little bit more respect than I do now, because I know the system is at least fairer and is a system that works for me as a citizen."

As it is now, the only people this system serves are in the Premier's office. Do you know what, government backbenchers? You're not going to stand up and agree with me publicly, but you know in your hearts, minds and souls that I'm right. This system does not work. It works for Mike, it worked for Bob and it worked for David before that, and it will look for whoever the next majority government is, but it certainly doesn't work for government backbenchers. I would argue that it doesn't even work for certain cabinet ministers, as we well know. It certainly doesn't work for the opposition. More importantly, it doesn't work for the public.

I say to the member for Northumberland, we as New Democrats will support your bill. We will vote in favour. We believe your bill should go to committee because there are a couple of technical issues that need to be dealt with. I spoke to the member earlier and I think he acknowledges that. But I would certainly hope we don't end up again where we were not too long ago, when the member introduced Bill 173 in this House and because the government prorogued the House, his bill died. I hope we don't we end up back in the same spot.

I say to the government across the way and I say to the opposition here today, as parliamentarians, let's undertake to at least have a discussion in this place about how we start a process of democratic renewal, so that when people look at this Legislature they have a little bit more confidence about their elected representatives and they look at this Legislature with at least the confidence of knowing it represents them and that, at the end, their vote counts, because now it doesn't.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):** I would like to speak to the bill. This bill was introduced by Mr Galt, the member for Northumberland. The intent of the bill seems to be to deal with the issue of the carrying of passengers in the back of pickup trucks. I must confess that I just assumed that was the law, and it's not the law. It's the law in a number of other provinces, but it's not the law in this province. So I congratulate him for bringing forward what to me is a very obvious issue. I cannot believe that this House will not give unanimous consent to the bill and that it will not have speedy

carriage through the House, although I believe the bill should go to committee. There are several concerns I have with the bill and I have spoken to the member for Northumberland about them.

When you think about what already exists, with section 106 of the Highway Traffic Act, which deals with seat belts, you can't even take a child home from the hospital because they won't let the child out of the hospital unless they're satisfied that child is going to be in a safety device, and yet we allow people to ride in the back of vehicles.

The passage of the bill is long overdue. There has been reference to tragic situations around this province. It's high time this issue became law in Ontario. As I have indicated, several other provinces already have similar legislation. It could be argued of course that the charge of careless driving could be levied against someone who is allowing passengers to ride in the back of a truck, but that may be a matter for the courts and I certainly wouldn't want to hang my hat on that issue. Careless driving is where a truck is being driven "without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration for other persons using the highway." That's careless driving, the wording in the act, but it may not apply.

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There are other provinces that deal with it. I think there are five of them. Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Quebec deal with it and have legislation with respect to this provision that's being suggested by Mr Galt. I would hope the committee would take those bills and look at them, because there are good provisions in those that could be used with respect to the province of Ontario.

I have a couple of questions that we don't have time today to debate, but there are couple of issues that I raise because I would hope this bill would carry and that when it reached the committee—I don't know what "outside a motor vehicle" means, for example. I don't know whether "motor vehicle" is the complete part. I don't know what the wording of that means. There are other questions; for example, the issue of trucks or vehicles that are used in parades. There's a whole list of exclusions in Mr Galt's bill and I would hope that that may be included as an exclusion in the bill, that under certain circumstances that could be an exclusion as well, although he has a subsection that orders in council could be made for it and perhaps it could be put forward there. I'd like to hear more rationale with respect to that.

The other provinces specifically deal with that. For example, Alberta has an exclusion that says that "vehicles forming part of an entertainment exhibition that has been approved by the council of the municipality in which it is taking place"—they have that as a specific exclusion. The province of New Brunswick has a similar specific exclusion. It may be that that exclusion should be in this bill, but that's an issue that could be dealt with in committee.

New Brunswick also has a provision that goes into a little bit more of an elaboration with respect to con-

struction. He mentions it as one of his exclusions, "A motor vehicle engaged in highway construction or maintenance." New Brunswick talks about where the passenger is being transported to or from a work site. There may be other items, exclusions, that need to be discussed or have representation from others.

There is the bill in Nova Scotia, which also has some provisions I think could be used in the Ontario bill.

In summary, I wholeheartedly support the bill and will be voting in favour of it. I encourage all members of the House to do that, and I hope it goes to committee where we can deal with the matter further.

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** It's certainly a pleasure to rise in support of Dr Galt's bill. As I think most members know, road safety is a critical issue for this province and for the Ministry of Transportation. We are very much in support of any measure that is going to make and increase road safety. I certainly would want to suggest support for this bill.

When you look at the issue here, what we're talking about is the fact that the current Highway Traffic Act does not specifically prohibit the transport of people in the back of pickups. Clearly over the years there has been an increasing public awareness of the dangers this represents, an increasing public awareness of the safety benefits of seat belts, and certainly with young children, proper seating in a car, in a vehicle. The fact that this bill would eliminate the danger of the unrestrained passenger in the back of a pickup truck is certainly a step forward.

There's a whole body of research that would support this bill. The fact is that people are 25 times more likely to be ejected riding in the cargo area of a vehicle than they would be in the cab. We also certainly have many other jurisdictions which have made this particularly important step. There are provinces across the country that have done this and also in the US.

Particularly vulnerable are young people in this area, where there is the temptation to gather a group of friends that exceeds the number of seat belts, so it is to that group that we particularly direct the attention of this legislation. It is also demonstrated by the research done that it is young people who are more likely to be involved in fatalities with regard to people travelling in truck beds.

It is really an important step in the continuation of making sure that our roads are the safest in the country. We need to ensure that this bill receives the support it deserves. I know that in rural areas there are some issues with regard to exceptions and speed limits and things like that, but I think those are issues that certainly can be dealt with. Overall, the importance of this bill is to make sure that we continue to have road safety as an important priority for this province.

I want to congratulate the member on bringing this forward in order for us to be able to examine this bill and give it the kind of consideration it deserves.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I wish to indicate my support for this legislation, which is in keeping with a number of pieces of legislation and regulatory changes that have been made probably in the past dozen

years. If there's one area where I think our society has advanced considerably, it is in the area of automotive safety, of vehicular safety.

Automobile manufacturers have been compelled to make, and sometimes of their own volition have made, changes to the vehicles to make them safer. Laws have been changed through the Highway Traffic Act to ensure that there's a greater degree of safety.

The member mentioned speaking to students and talking about problems for the students. When I have spoken to secondary school students, particularly those who are about to begin to drive vehicles, are driving vehicles, or perhaps will be in a year or two, one of the things I mention to them is that legislators don't do things simply to be mean to them.

The regulatory regime which now governs licensing for young people, for instance, is pretty onerous. Most of us in this House—I suspect, looking around, all of us—had a pretty easy driver's test when we wanted to obtain our licence. It is much more difficult today.

There are two things I explain to students. One is the reason. I ask them, "What do you think the reason is that your insurance premiums are higher than you believe they should be?" Second, "Why do you think we pass legislation such as tougher rules for being able to drive a vehicle?" Third, we look at a piece of legislation such as this. It is lots of fun to ride in the back of that truck. It is a thrill. Why do we pass legislation like this? Is the member for Northumberland simply out to be mean to young people? Obviously not.

1150

We have a family in the gallery today who has had a most tragic experience. There are other experiences of that kind. That is very often what prompts us as legislators to take action. As I've explained to them, as soon as there's a wreck of a train where young people are racing a train and five people are killed—and that's happened in some areas—then there's a great demand for action, and there should be, to try to find some way to overcome that problem. We can't pass legislation which will overcome all of these problems, but this legislation, when it goes to committee, is a piece of legislation which will deal with one aspect of a problem that exists out there.

People who have experienced a tragedy cannot bring those people back, or if people are badly injured, may not be able to repair those injuries for those people. But what we can do is look at what has happened in the past and try to determine how we can improve that in the future. This legislation and the legislation for bus safety that my colleague from Chatham-Kent Essex has brought before this House on a number of occasions are two pieces of legislation which have an opportunity to protect particularly young people—people of all ages, but particularly young people—from the kind of tragedy that has prompted this piece of legislation.

**Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** I also rise today to speak in favour of MPP Doug Galt's private member's bill, the Highway Traffic Amendment

Act. I believe this private member's bill addresses a key concern in many ridings, especially rural ridings across Ontario. Most people can see the dangers associated with people riding in the back of a pickup truck while going down a road or a provincial highway, but it's still something that many young people continue to do, especially in the summer months. I am aware of a few incidents where people have been thrown from the back of trucks coming home from the lake or from a bush party.

Also, as an MPP who represents a large number of farmers involved in labour-intensive agriculture—in ginseng and tomatoes and tobacco and cucumbers—I'm pleased to see that, in the bill, a motor vehicle travelling less than 60 kilometres an hour and engaged in agricultural, horticultural or livestock-raising operations is exempt from this amendment to the Highway Traffic Act. Farmers will want to be assured that this bill will not disrupt normal farm operations.

As a past president of the Norfolk Farm Safety Association, I realize the importance of safety around farms. So do farmers. Farmers in general are safe operators and use common sense when they are moving farm labour around from, in many cases, one farm to another or one part of the field to another. Farmers often use flatbeds, cut-down pickup trucks or pickup trucks themselves to take workers back and forth to the field. Not everyone can fit in the cab of a truck. Most of the time, farm labourers are transported in this fashion at very slow speeds. They rarely travel on busy roadways. I know one could argue that cars should be used for this purpose. They seat more people. But they're not suitable for farm lanes, especially in wet weather. I know from personal experience that diesel fuel, dust, mud, grease and hydraulic fluid do not go well on car upholstery.

As this bill moves forward, flexibility and discretion will be needed to recognize the concerns associated with these types of labour-intensive farming. A few years back I worked with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, with Ken Kelly, to have changes made to the Highway Traffic Act with respect to certain farm vehicles—for example, school buses that have been cut back to carry round bales or pickups that have been converted to what are referred to as baggy trucks to haul tobacco. These vehicles can now be classified as implements of husbandry. Today the Ministry of Transportation does tag these farm vehicles as implements of husbandry and it gives farmers the recognition they need under the Highway Traffic Act. These implements of husbandry are required to have working lights, brakes, and good tires, and they operate at under 40 kilometres an hour.

Each year I, as do many of us, meet with hundreds of farmers. I meet with labour-intensive farmers—potatoes, ginseng, apples, just to name a few. The topic of farm safety and the transportation of farm workers usually comes up. Education of farmers and farm workers is essential in Ontario for prevention of these kinds of problems that may occur in agriculture. Again, thanks to such organizations as the farm safety association, farm accidents are becoming fewer and far between.

Just to wrap up, I recognize the serious problem with respect to accidents and it relates to the recreational use of these vehicles. The evidence is in all of our ridings. I clearly support MPP Galt's bill. I feel it will aid those who are not informed about the dangers of unsafe vehicle practices and, at the same time, should not penalize or disrupt farm practices. For that reason, it has my whole-hearted support. I recognize we have to maintain a balance between the recreational use of these kinds of trucks and valid farm and agricultural use of these vehicles.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Northumberland has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Galt:** First, on behalf of the Mackey family and the Lawrence family, thank you very much for the support on both sides of the House. It's reassuring, I'm sure, to them as well as to myself.

It was a good point that the member from Chatham-Kent Essex made, and I believe also the member from Timmins-James Bay, as to what kind of support there was when we introduced it last December and it died on the order paper. The Minister of Transportation is in the House and he has given me his assurance; he would like to have been able to get here earlier to have spoken on the bill, but he is certainly very supportive.

The reason it was introduced so late in the last session had to do with partisan politics and the appearance of trying to take advantage of somebody else's grief. It was not my intent to try and capitalize on that, so consequently it was not introduced in September or October; rather, I waited a reasonable length of time. I'm very pleased that the parents of those two young men are so supportive of what we're doing here.

It was interesting, the comments the member from Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey made about assuming it already was law. He's a lawyer. I have great respect for him and his ability as a lawyer. We had quite a debate in the hallway here. He said my bill is useless; it's already in place. I just happened to have the assistant deputy minister of transportation nearby, so I called him over and got them together. He soon realized that, lo and behold, this was not law in Ontario.

With just a little luck we can get this into committee, and maybe we can have this in place as law for the summer so that young people tempted to ride in the box of a half-ton truck may not be so inclined if they know it's illegal.

On behalf of Bart and Jay, I would ask everyone to support this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time for debating this ballot item is completed.

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT ACT, 2001 LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SANTÉ ET LA SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** We will now deal with ballot item number 7.

Mr Agostino has moved second reading of Bill 34, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to increase the penalties for contraventions of the Act and regulations.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** Mr Speaker, I'd ask consent of the House to refer this to the standing committee on general government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Agreed? No?

All in favour will please rise and remain standing while you're counted.

A majority is in favour; therefore the bill will be referred to the standing committee on general government.

## HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (OUTSIDE RIDERS), 2001 LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (PASSAGERS À L'EXTÉRIEUR D'UN VÉHICULE)

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** We will now deal with ballot item number 8.

Mr Galt has moved second reading of Bill 33, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit persons from riding on the outside of a motor vehicle.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to refer Bill 33 to the standing committee on general government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

This completes all matters before the House this morning. We will reconvene at 1:30 this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1200 to 1330.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### PUBLIC EDUCATION

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I rise today to talk about the condition of our schools in Hamilton and the priorities of this government. At a time when schools across this province are starving for cash, for textbooks, for computers, this government believes it's more important to put half a billion dollars into private schools in Ontario.

Let me tell you about Hamilton. The Hamilton board needs at least \$17 million to repair leaky roofs and boilers, and deal with air quality. There are dozens of schools that have asbestos tiles that they can't afford to remove and fix. The board has cut 57 teaching positions—21 special education positions and nine English-as-a-second-language positions are gone.

That is a brief synopsis of some of the realities we're facing in Hamilton and across this province. While we continue to beg the province for more money, for smaller classrooms, for more computers, not to have to have fundraisers to buy textbooks, this government is intent on destroying public education in Ontario by their policies, by starving public education, by ensuring that the private schools will flourish.

This is a priority for the Liberals: to fix public education. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals believe that public education is the number one priority. We stand for public education, we will fight for public education and we're going to continue to ensure every single day in this Legislature that we expose what this government's all about: a government intent on destroying public education to benefit their friends in private education.

#### MISSING CHILDREN

**Mr Wayne Wettkaufer (Kitchener Centre):** I'm wearing a green ribbon today to acknowledge National Missing Children's Day, which falls on May 25. Throughout the month of May, Child Find Ontario is holding its 10th annual Green Ribbon of Hope campaign. For the last 16 years, Child Find Ontario has been helping to bring missing children home.

Meanwhile, children, the future of our society, are still missing—have run away, have been lost or have been abducted. Last year's numbers are quite unfortunate: 20,000 of Canada's 60,000 missing children were from Ontario, enough to fill all the seats in SkyDome.

The positive news is that the hard work of over 1,000 volunteers throughout Ontario and the help from civic and corporate partners has aided in the location of over 90% of missing children. Their 24-hour hotline, help from law enforcement, customs and immigration, and the community have all contributed enormously to this cause.

I congratulate Child Find Ontario on its successes and commend the organization for its tireless efforts in this cause. My hopes are that communities will continue to work together and fight for lost children and the families from whom they are separated.

I take this time to ask for unanimous consent for MPPs to wear this ribbon in the Legislature today to show their acknowledgement of National Missing Children's Day, which falls on May 25.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

#### BEVERLY MASCOLL

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River):** Today we mourn the passing of Dr Beverly Mascoll, a great Canadian and a leader and an activist, who succumbed to cancer at Sunnybrook hospital on Wednesday, May 16, 2001.

Bev Mascoll has touched the heart and soul of every community in the greater Toronto area and beyond. A Nova Scotian who moved to Toronto as a teenager, Bev Mascoll started the Mascoll Beauty Supply Co in 1970, the largest supplier and distributor of black beauty products in Canada.

She had a strong commitment to public education and established the Beverly Mascoll Community Foundation in 1996, providing post-secondary education scholarships, to promote the advancement of women and to assist in the development of youth.

She was the first chair of black Canadian studies at Dalhousie University. Her work and contribution to all of the various communities was recognized and rewarded. She was appointed a member of the Order of Canada in 1998. In 1994 she was honoured with the Nova Scotia Black Cultural Centre Wall of Honour Award. After receiving an honorary doctorate of law in 1999, she returned to university and graduated with a bachelor of arts degree last year. It's indicative of Bev's commitment to improve and educate both herself and all those around her.

Bev was like a dove in flight: quiet, graceful and soaring to great heights. Those of us who knew her knew that notwithstanding her free spirit, an incredible wingspan, the true wind beneath her wings was the quiet and steady influence and unwavering support of her most avid supporter and loving husband, Emerson, to whom she was married for 37 years.

Bev had a profound influence on all those who came in contact with her. She leaves behind her loving husband, Emerson, her son, Eldon, and his fiancée, Nicole, who will all miss her and her contribution to our great country.

#### VISITORS FROM MATTHEWS HALL

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I rise today to ask the House to recognize some visiting parliamentarians who are with us in the members' gallery today. They are the 17 elected members of the student Parliament at Matthews Hall, a school in the great riding of London West. They are accompanied by teachers Harry MacLean and Jennifer McKay and are in grades 3 to 8. They are here to learn more about their Ontario Legislature.

Matthews Hall was founded in 1918 by Kate Matthews. Its curriculum fosters appreciation for knowledge for its own sake and for its use in improving and extending the student's world. The school is a coeducational institution for junior kindergarten to grade 8, and its purpose is to awaken students to their own possibilities as confident and caring members of their community.

The school motto is "Deb o, Possum, Volo" which is Latin for "I must, I can, I will," a motto which applies as much to the work we do here as it does to the work done at Matthews Hall.

I ask all members to join with me in welcoming our visitors from Matthews Hall.

## NURSES

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** Ontario nurses are at Queen's Park today to try and make the Harris government understand the reality of the nursing shortage and their concerns about being able to provide quality patient care. These are the same nurses the Premier once said were as dispensable as hula hoops. These are the same nurses who have been told by a Premier who wanted a 44% raise that 2% is too much for nurses. These are the same nurses who were told by the Minister of Finance that if they want to go to Alberta, they can go.

Ontario nurses got the message from the Harris government six years ago. Hundreds of Ontario nurses have gone to the United States because they couldn't get a full-time job here. Hundreds more have left the profession because they did not believe they could provide a quality of care to their patients.

Let's remember these are the same nurses who are working too much overtime in hospitals trying to maintain patient care. These are the same nurses who fear for the physical safety of patients in nursing homes because the government doesn't fund a minimum level of nursing staff. These are the same nurses who provide care at home to keep people out of hospitals and are paid less because this government wants home care to be cheap care.

For the sake of the patients in this province, it is time to hear these nurses when they say:

"Whereas the nurses of Ontario are seeking relief from heavy workloads which have contributed to unsafe conditions for patients and have increased the risk of injuries to nurses; and

"Whereas there's a chronic nursing shortage in Ontario;

"Whereas the Ontario government has failed to live up to its commitment to provide safe, high-quality care for patients,

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand that the Ontario government take positive action to ensure that our communities have enough nursing staff to provide patients with the care they need."

It is time to hear the nurses of this province.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just so the people in the galleries may know, unfortunately clapping isn't allowed as well. We're not even allowed to do the clapping. We'd appreciate it if you would adhere to the rules.

## STEVEN MELL

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** There is a young boy who lives in my riding of York North. His name is Steven Mell. He is 11 years old. He's like any other regular kid. He swims for the Newmarket Stingrays, goes to school and likes to read.

However, young Steven was able to accomplish something that many adults have trouble attempting. Steven recently gained certification in Microsoft Office User Specialist in Microsoft Word, an internationally recognized certification for Microsoft products. According to many business managers, this certification is a highly sought skill in today's workforce.

The test is described as being very difficult, and many business people who take it fail, but not this student. Not only did Steven pass, but he obtained 98%. This is quite the accomplishment for a boy of only 11.

The test specifically asks the taker to demonstrate proficiency working in text, working with paragraphs, documents, pictures and charts, using tables and managing files. There are 30 questions that the candidate must answer in just 45 minutes.

Young Steven has not stopped here. He is now in the process of launching his first Web site. He has taught himself how to create Web pages by learning how to use programs such as Dreamweaver.

Steven Mell is an extraordinary achiever whose interests will take him far. I congratulate him on his accomplishment.

1340

## WATER QUALITY

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Our hearts go out to the residents of Walkerton, who a year ago began to experience an environmental nightmare that included the deaths of seven people and serious illness for hundreds of others as a result of drinking the town's contaminated water. The testimony of a courageous Ministry of the Environment drinking water specialist, Godfrey Jenkins, confirmed clearly and pointedly that the massive environment ministry staff cuts "severely hampered the ability of the remaining professionals to do their job." With the highly regarded MOE laboratories closed by the Harris government and the ministry hampered by huge staff and funding cuts, the risk of a Walkerton type of tragedy was dramatically increased.

What has happened since then? Of the hirings that have taken place, 68 temporary staff have been hired for Operation Clean Water, 67% of all new hires in operations are temporary, and 72% of new senior officers hired are temporary. If Walkerton taught this government anything, it is that the ministry must have adequate staff and resources to do the job of protecting groundwater. One year later, nothing substantive has been done to remedy the problems that caused seven deaths and thousands of illnesses.

Since the Harris government took office in 1995, over 50% of the ministry budget has been slashed. The Ministry of the Environment's first-ever budget in 1971 was \$302 million, some \$50 million more than the ministry now has 30 years later. Infrastructure funding is inadequate, the Brampton water and sewer employee training centre is closed and they've done nothing about old wells that are causing contamination in the province.

## NURSES

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** In the front lines of a hospital, when a "stat" is called or there's a "code critical," every single nurse knows what to do. They know how to respond. They know how to be there for the patients. But who in this province is responding to the nurses when they're calling a code critical for the front-line nursing personnel of this province? We have a critical shortage of nurses.

Let me just talk about the hospital sector for a moment. Nurses every day are working additional hours. They're working through their lunches, through their breaks. They're not taking any time down to get their energy back to deal with vulnerable patients. On top of that, they're working hours of overtime; they're not refusing overtime. They are burnt out. They are under-valued. They are underpaid.

What does this government do at a time when they profess to understand the need for more nurses, when they profess to put in place a solution to bring back 12,000 needed nurses to our hospital sector? What do they do? The Premier of this province says nurses who are in wage negotiations right now shouldn't expect a significant increase. The same government that gave a lucrative increase to doctors, the same government that gave a lucrative increase to judges and to government lawyers, that offered 42% to their own MPPs, says nurses aren't worth it. The finance minister said that if nurses want an agreement like in Alberta and want to leave and go to Alberta, so be it. Well, "so be it" is not good enough. Our health care needs our nurses. We need our nurses. This government should listen.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I request unanimous consent—we may have it in the House—on the occasion of the anniversary of the unfortunate events in Walkerton for representatives of the three political parties represented in the House to offer words on this occasion.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** My understanding was that we have unanimous consent to have a statement from each of the caucuses on the anniversary of this tragedy. I'm just trying to clarify. I didn't think anybody would not want to do this. We've been talking about this for two weeks.

**The Speaker:** I can't be aware of any agreements. I was very careful to listen, and I did hear some noes.

The government House leader, maybe, for clarification.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, if I can shed some light upon this, I did call both the House leaders' offices this morning to let them know that the MPP for the community, Mr Murdoch, felt very strongly that he wanted to ask for unanimous consent for a moment of silence, which would be done after statements and responses, that based on his consultations with the community he felt that would be a more dignified way to mark this event today than to have political speeches.

**The Speaker:** The member for Niagara Centre on a point of order as well.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I understood there to have been an agreement that there would be unanimous consent obtained by this House today. For the government to breach that agreement shows an outright fear of the issue of Walkerton, and I think this is something that people should be well aware of.

**The Speaker:** The Speaker can't be aware of any agreements. I simply asked. I was very careful to listen, and I did hear some noes, unfortunately.

We'll put the time back on to start right from the beginning.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** Mr Speaker, I have a related but different point of order: I want to ask for unanimous consent—and please hear me out—to read a statement which was sent to me by the citizens of Walkerton. They asked me to read this on the record in the House today, on the assumption that there was going to be unanimous consent for all-party statements. The citizens of Walkerton sent me a statement that they wanted read today on their behalf in this House. I ask for unanimous consent to do that.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent to read that statement? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

## EXCHANGE PROJECT

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** Last night, a delegation of 22 visitors arrived from the city of Baguio, the twin city of Vaughan, in the Philippines. This has been part of a two-year exchange project between the York Catholic District School Board, specifically St Elizabeth Catholic High School in Thornhill, and the Filipino Canadian Association of Vaughan.

Last year, 26 students, parents and teachers from St Elizabeth experienced life in Baguio City, Manila and a Missionary of the Poor in Naga City. In Baguio, our students visited the Philippines Military Academy, the Balatoc and several other interesting sights for the Philippines. They had the chance to engage in dialogue with many students from local high schools, universities and elementary schools. When the students from St Elizabeth visited the Missionary of the Poor in Naga City, they tended to the needs of the orphaned, the mentally ill and those living in squalid conditions on garbage dumps. This trip helped to broaden our students' sense of responsi-

bility toward others less fortunate and helped them to recognize how fortunate we all are.

Today, the delegation from the Philippines continues their visit to Canada. They will be exposed to social, educational, political, cultural and spiritual life in the city of Vaughan and the greater Toronto area.

Though I don't see them in the visitors' gallery at this moment, they will be here in the chamber during question period.

On behalf of the citizens of Thornhill and the members of our Legislature, I welcome our guests to our community and wish them a pleasant stay. May we continue to learn from each other.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### OAK RIDGES MORaine PROTECTION ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 SUR LA PROTECTION DE LA MORaine D'OAK RIDGES

Mr Hodgson moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 55, An Act to protect the Oak Ridges Moraine / Projet de loi 55, Loi visant à protéger la moraine d'Oak Ridges.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The minister for a short statement?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I'll do it after.

1350

### BROWNFIELDS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES FRICHES CONTAMINÉES

Mr Hodgson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 56, An Act to encourage the revitalization of contaminated land and to make other amendments relating to environmental matters / Projet de loi 56, Loi visant à encourager la revitalisation des terrains contaminés et apportant d'autres modifications se rapportant à des questions environnementales.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

### GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 SUR L'EFFICIENCE DU GOUVERNEMENT

Mr Sterling moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 57, An Act to promote government efficiency and to improve services to taxpayers by amending or repealing certain Acts / Projet de loi 57, Loi visant à favoriser

l'efficience du gouvernement et à améliorer les services aux contribuables en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

## AMBULANCE SERVICES COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001

### SUR LA NÉGOCIATION COLLECTIVE DANS LES SERVICES D'AMBULANCE

Mr Stockwell moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 58, An Act to ensure the provision of essential ambulance services in the event of a strike or lock-out of ambulance workers / Projet de loi 58, Loi visant à assurer la fourniture des services d'ambulance essentiels dans l'éventualité d'une grève ou d'un lock-out de préposés aux services d'ambulance.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.  
*The division bells rang from 1352 to 1357.*

**The Speaker:** Would all the members kindly take their seats, please.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes
Amott, Ted
Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby
Chudleigh, Ted
Clark, Brad
Cunningham, Dianne
Dunlop, Garfield
Ecker, Janet
Elliott, Brenda
Galt, Doug
Gilchrist, Steve
Gill, Raminder
Hardeman, Ernie
Hodgson, Chris
Hudak, Tim
Jackson, Cameron
Johns, Helen
Johnson, Bert
Klees, Frank
Marland, Margaret
Maves, Bart
Mazzilli, Frank
Miller, Norm
Molinari, Tina R.
Munro, Julia
Murdoch, Bill
Mushinski, Marilyn
Newman, Dan
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Runciman, Robert W.
Spina, Joseph
Sterling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Stockwell, Chris
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tilson, David
Tsubouchi, David H.
Tumbull, David
Wettlaufner, Wayne
Wood, Bob

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays
Agostino, Dominic
Bartolucci, Rick
Bisson, Gilles
Bountrogianni, Marie
Bradley, James J.
Curling, Alvin
Di Cocco, Caroline
Dombrowsky, Leona
Duncan, Dwight
Garretson, John
Marchese, Rosario
McLeod, Lyn
McMeekin, Ted
Peters, Steve
Phillips, Gerry

Bryant, Michael  
Caplan, David  
Churley, Marilyn  
Colle, Mike  
Cordiano, Joseph

Hoy, Pat  
Kennedy, Gerard  
Kormos, Peter  
Kwinter, Monte  
Larkin, Frances

Pupatello, Sandra  
Ruprecht, Tony  
Sergio, Mario  
Smitherman, George

been provided by a different method in a discrete area of the municipality.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 40; the nays are 29.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

The minister for a short statement?

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I'm introducing the Ambulance Services Collective Bargaining Act, 2001. If passed by the Legislature, this bill would ensure continuous ambulance services during a strike or lockout.

The need for this legislation lies in the fact that ambulance services were transferred from the province to municipalities this year. The transfer means that the majority of ambulance workers now fall under the Labour Relations Act, 1995, and that gives them an unfettered right to strike. This legislation will require that an essential service ambulance service agreement be in place before any strike or lockout takes place. The right to strike would be retained, but critical services would continue to be delivered.

Public safety is obviously our number one concern and I would assume it's shared by all in this House. We have met that concern without interfering unduly with the collective bargaining process. I hope that all members of this House will join with us in recognizing the need for reliable, uninterrupted ambulance service across this province.

**Mr Wayne Wetlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to draw the attention of the House to the page from Kitchener Centre, Sabrina Wirz, who is celebrating her 14th birthday today.

**The Speaker:** Happy birthday from all of us.

#### POLICE SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES SERVICES POLICIERS

Mr Tilson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 59, An Act to amend the Police Services Act / Projet de loi 59, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services policiers.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):** I'm introducing the Police Services Amendment Act, 2001. It amends the Police Services Act to allow municipalities an additional choice in the way they provide police services. Section 5 of the current act requires that municipalities provide police services by means of only one of a number of listed methods. The bill allows municipalities to combine two or more methods where the municipality contains remote or widely dispersed communities, or where police services have historically

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion regarding the ordering of private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(d), the following changes be made to the ballot list for private members' public business: Mr Bradley and Mr Levac exchange places in order of precedence, such that Mr Levac assumes ballot item number 12 and Mr Bradley assumes ballot item number 38.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### SMART GROWTH STRATEGY

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** It's my pleasure to inform my colleagues about three important steps the government is taking this week to move forward on Ontario Smart Growth.

Today I announced two pieces of legislation.

One would, if passed, put a temporary halt to development on the Oak Ridges moraine. This six-month freeze would allow the government to undertake a consultation leading to an action plan—

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** Obviously, the Liberals aren't in favour of this.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The member for Sudbury, come to order. Thank you very much.

Sorry, Minister.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** This six-month freeze would allow the government to undertake a consultation leading to an action plan to protect those parts of the moraine that need protection.

The other piece of legislation, if passed, would help foster clean, healthy and dynamic communities by encouraging the environmental cleanup and revitalization of lands known as brownfields.

The third important step begins tomorrow, when we have the first of 17 regional consultation sessions on Smart Growth.

First, the Oak Ridges moraine legislation: As the members know, the Oak Ridges moraine is a unique natural feature. It contains green open space and forested areas. Often called southern Ontario's rain barrel, it contains the headwaters of a number of important rivers. More than that, a quarter of a million people rely on the aquifer beneath the moraine for their drinking water.

Why are we acting now? In my preliminary consultations on Smart Growth and in reviewing the letters many members of this House have received from the public on urban development issues, it is clear to me that the Oak Ridges moraine must be part of the Ontario Smart Growth strategy. This government has heard those concerns and we have decided to take decisive action.

At the same time, the province is required under the Planning Act to conduct a review of the provincial policy statement. The regions of Peel, York and Durham are also working together on their own strategy for the moraine. As the members know, the moraine is facing considerable development pressure, with a number of applications now at different points in the planning process.

The government believes we need to take a time-out. We need to make sure that our Smart Growth strategy, the provincial policy statement, the regions' municipal planning policies and the decisions that will be made on current and future development applications are all consistent and that they protect what needs to be protected.

If passed by the Legislature, the Oak Ridges Moraine Protection Act, 2001, would establish a moratorium on all new development that requires official plan, zoning bylaw or subdivision approval. The moratorium would also apply to applications currently before a municipal council or the Ontario Municipal Board. If the Legislature approves this bill, it would take effect as of today.

While the moratorium is in effect, we want to hear from experts and the public alike. The consultation would take the form of round-table discussions involving all stakeholders: environmental groups and developers, municipalities and resource interests, and members of the public.

After the consultation is over, we will bring forward a clear action plan. We will have certainty. Areas that need to be protected will be protected. Areas that need further study will be studied. And development applications in the areas where it is clear that no special protection is needed will be able to proceed according to clear, understandable rules.

The Brownfields Statute Law Amendment Act is another key element in the Ontario Smart Growth strategy. Let me first acknowledge the significant contribution that my colleague the Minister of the Environment has made to this proposed legislation.

I would also like to recognize several representatives of the brownfields advisory panel who have joined us in the gallery this afternoon: Beth Benson, executive direc-

tor of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust; Peter Van Loan of Fraser Milner Casgrain, barristers and solicitors; Rosalind Cooper of Fasken Martineau DuMoulin; Louise Verity, director of policy for the Toronto Board of Trade; Dianne Saxe, barrister and solicitor with the Environmental Law and Dispute Resolution Boutique; David R. Turner, vice-president of Marsh Canada Ltd; Neil Rodgers, president of the Urban Development Institute; David Surplis, president of the Council of Ontario Construction Associations; and George Boire, vice-president of AMEX, Strategic Client Services, Earth and Environment. Unfortunately, Hamilton Mayor Bob Wade could not be here as well. I know he is a strong supporter of this legislation.

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Brownfields are lands where industrial or commercial activity took place in the past. Today these lands are often contaminated, underused or abandoned. Brownfields are usually located close to services and transportation. Revitalizing them encourages efficient and effective use of existing infrastructure. The lands are often in a city core. As they are cleaned and redeveloped, and people once again live and work in and energize these areas, there can be enormous social and economic gains to the community.

Redeveloping brownfields means cleaning up contaminated lands for our own benefit and the benefit of future generations. As municipalities and developers and investors increasingly realize the potential, cleaning up and redeveloping brownfields can also preserve our vital green spaces and farmlands for all the people of this province.

By bringing these old industrial and commercial sites back to life, communities have a unique chance to improve their quality of life, protect the environment and attract new business and jobs.

We held extensive consultations over a two-year period of time. We received advice from a panel of brownfields experts. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Blake Hutcheson, who chaired the panel, and all the members of the team for their fine work and recommendations.

Today, we move forward based on the input we heard. This legislation, if passed, would assist brownfield redevelopment in several key areas. It would set out clear rules for the cleanup of contaminated brownfield sites to ensure that environmental standards are met and the public health is protected. It would also provide liability protection from future environmental orders for municipalities, lenders, owners and developers involved with brownfield properties. It would streamline planning processes to expedite brownfield projects and help municipalities provide financial support for cleanup costs. The Brownfields Statute Law Amendment Act is an important part of our government's Smart Growth strategy.

Finally, I would like to tell the members briefly about the next step in our Smart Growth strategy. Tomorrow, I will be travelling to Peterborough for the first of 17 consultation meetings on Smart Growth that will take place

over the next month. These round-table discussions will involve stakeholders with an interest in encouraging, managing and sustaining growth in Ontario.

At the same time, advertisements will appear in newspapers all over the province inviting people to get a copy of our booklet entitled *Get Engaged...in Ontario Smart Growth*, and to have their say on Smart Growth. The members will receive a copy of the booklet soon, or they can find a copy on the government's new Smart Growth Web site.

Ontario Smart Growth rests on three pillars: a strong, growing and competitive economy; strong communities; and a healthy environment. The two pieces of legislation I have introduced today, and the consultation that begins tomorrow, are important steps toward the achievement of those goals.

#### GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** This government was elected on a vision of a better Ontario: to build a strong economy, to create jobs, to cut taxes, to increase government efficiency, to cut red tape, and to remove barriers to business. It was re-elected on a vision of an Ontario that could compete globally, at the same time remaining the best place in North America to live, work, invest, and raise a family.

It is with this vision in mind that I introduce the Government Efficiency Act, 2001. This bill is a continuation of our fight to bring in good government; to remove barriers to business, investment and job creation; to ease access to public services; and to clean up rules that no longer serve their intended purpose.

The Government Efficiency Act, 2001 contains more than 120 various items involving 15 ministries. If passed, this bill would let Ontarians gain quicker access to a number of government services. It would eliminate certain outdated procedures and acts.

But beyond including amendments that provide good and efficient government, it would also provide for mandatory licence suspensions for those convicted of fleeing from police, it would confirm the requirement to serve a child's lawyer when bringing an application for guardianship or court approval for the disposition of property of a minor child, and it would make it an offence for anyone to give false information to the Ministry of the Environment or its employees or its agents under several environmental statutes.

If passed, this bill is consistent with last month's speech from the throne that promised to streamline government and remove barriers to jobs, investment and growth.

I would encourage all members of this House to support this good government bill.

#### SMART GROWTH STRATEGY

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** I want to first of all congratulate the minister for having the guts to do what his predecessors didn't have the guts to do, and that is to introduce legislation that is vital to the health not only of the Oak Ridges moraine area directly but I think of all southern Ontario. So I do congratulate him for having the guts to do that.

To get to some of the details, one of the things about this bill that I certainly like, and that I think our leader and our party like, is the fact that they finally have listened to us and invoked a freeze on development. I know for the last couple of years they laughed at the opposition, they laughed at the environmentalists, they laughed at the local ratepayers who asked this government to invoke a freeze on development, and they scoffed at these good people who were trying to tell them to do the right thing.

I'm glad to see that there's been a turnaround in this government, and I hope it isn't just because the by-election is around the corner in Vaughan-King-Aurora. What we all have to be very careful of is that this is not just a temporary attempt to essentially distract people from the focus and importance of protecting the moraine. This cannot just be for six months. We hope that the six months is the beginning of a permanent freeze on all those precious parts of the moraine from Northumberland to the Niagara Escarpment. That's what we want.

We could have saved so much time. We could have saved the city of Richmond Hill, the town of Uxbridge, King City—this government could have saved those good people millions of dollars in consultants' fees and lawyers' fees. They could have saved their developer friends millions of dollars at the OMB if they had listened to us two years ago and done the right thing at that time. But instead they dragged this thing on, they took away power from local communities and put it at the OMB.

Now they're going to try and take credit for a problem that they created. They created this problem in the Oak Ridges moraine because they gutted the Planning Act and promoted sprawl, and in fact funded sprawl, at the expense of the moraine. For six years that's all they did. Now they want to take credit for saving the moraine. But I do not give credit to this government, because they perpetrated the problems on the moraine.

I would prefer to give credit, unlike the howling members across, to the local citizens who fought this government. I want to give credit to people like Dorothy Izard and Deb Crandall in Caledon; Jane Underhill and Hal Jackman in King City; Brenda Hogg in Richmond Hill; Howard Taylor in Newmarket; Susan Walmer, Ben Kestein and David Tomlinson in Aurora; Teresa Johnson in Goodwood; Wyn Walters in Uxbridge; Linda Pym with the Ontario Federation of Naturalists; Gregor Beck with the Ontario Federation of Naturalists; Earthroots; Glenn De Baeremaeker with Save the Rouge. All these people took on this government at their own expense.

This government laughed at them, blocked them, tried to do everything to stonewall their attempts to protect this precious part of our province.

1420

We will make sure that this is not just a subterfuge. I challenge the minister to ensure that this is not just a ploy for the by-election. We will keep your feet to fire to make sure that this is going to be a permanent protection for this most beautiful and precious part of our province, because this is more than just land. This is our children's future water, the wildlife they can appreciate, and it will stop that disease called sprawl which you've been feeding for six years. Save, don't pave.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The member for Toronto-Danforth.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** I think—

**Mr Colle:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: As you know, my leader, Dalton McGuinty, and this party have been advocating an immediate freeze on the moraine. We ask for unanimous consent to move that this bill proceeds to second and third reading immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Colle:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There is some confusion. If we could try that again, unanimous consent?

**The Speaker:** No, we were very clear. I heard some noes.

**Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would move that this House give unanimous consent that we would have second and third reading of this proposed bill without debate.

**The Speaker:** Are there some timelines on this as well?

**Hon Mr Klees:** Immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Just so all the members are clear, what we will now do is look to the minister. He will move second reading and go on through it for third reading.

#### OAK RIDGES MORaine PROTECTION ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR LA PROTECTION DE LA MORaine D'OAK RIDGES

Mr Hodgson moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 55, An Act to protect the Oak Ridges Moraine / Projet de loi 55, Loi visant à protéger la moraine d'Oak Ridges.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Mr Hodgson has moved second reading. Order. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

#### OAK RIDGES MORaine PROTECTION ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR LA PROTECTION DE LA MORaine D'OAK RIDGES

Mr Hodgson moved third reading of the following bill: Bill 55, An Act to protect the Oak Ridges Moraine / Projet de loi 55, Loi visant à protéger la moraine d'Oak Ridges.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

#### SMART GROWTH STRATEGY

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Further responses? The member for Toronto-Danforth.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** It's the first time we've passed—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** It is the time of the member for Toronto-Danforth. I would appreciate some courtesy toward the member.

Sorry for the interruption. The member for Toronto-Danforth.

**Ms Churley:** Since some of the announcements today deal with water, I think the best way to respond is to read the statement from the citizens of Walkerton, because it is about water.

They wanted this read out in the House today. "One year after the Walkerton E coli tragedy, it is with great sadness that one must conclude all is not well regarding the security of Ontario's drinking water."

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd just like to know if this is in order. I believe she should be responding to the legislation that's been introduced.

**The Speaker:** I apologize. You have to stick to the subject matter. The issue of Walkerton does not relate to that subject and I would ask the member if she could do the statement.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: You will notice that among the bills introduced today was one that purports in its compendium to promote government efficiency and improve service to taxpayers with respect—it covers a number of ministries including agriculture and rural affairs and the environment. In the context of that and in view of this type of omnibus bill, I suggest the response can be a critical one and can rely upon history within this province of this government's record in those very specific areas where it purports to improve and promote government—

**The Speaker:** The member may know this is statements. It's not relating to a bill. It's responses to ministers' statements, not the bill. The minister's statements were very clear. She needs to stick to the topic, and unfortunately you can't get into topics like Walkerton. It

deals with the Oak Ridges moraine. I'm going to listen very carefully. I say this to the member: I'm sorry but those are the rules of this House. I don't make them, I just enforce them. They're in the standing orders and quite frankly they are very clear.

The member for Toronto-Danforth.

**Ms Churley:** Mr Speaker, that's too bad because I'm trying to fulfill the requests today of the citizens of Walkerton to have the first-year anniversary of the Walkerton tragedy commemorated here in this House.

Let me say that the statements embodied in the statement they sent to me today—which I won't read; I've been told I cannot read it—actually do tie in very much with some of the statements made by the minister today.

For instance, when we talk about the protection of the Oak Ridges moraine, one of the things I've been saying—Shelley Martel had a bill that I drafted and she brought through the House on my behalf in the last session. It passed second reading and was sent to a government committee, the committee that the member for Scarborough East chaired, and he refused to allow that bill to go out to committee—another bill that came before this House from me.

Just last week the member for Scarborough East brought forth a watered down version of his previous moraine bill, which took away the component that would freeze and then refused to stand up and send that bill to a committee.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** This is why.

**Ms Churley:** They're jeering and laughing now, but I think it's important to point out that all is not well in Ontario when it comes to water. I hope this six-month freeze on the moraine goes beyond that, because it doesn't go far enough, fast enough.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Read the bill.

**Ms Churley:** "Read the bill," he says. It's passed already.

What one has to think about today as we remember the dead in Walkerton who died from tainted water, as we remember those people today and the suffering they have gone through, let's remember how important it is to bring back a green planning act which the NDP brought in.

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It's interesting. The Gibbons report that this government has now embraced, and is marching down that road to actually gut and cut the ministry more and to privatize more and to deregulate more—that's where the government is going. What the citizens of Walkerton are saying today is that "a price has been tendered for our safety and the true cost of this ill-concealed bargain is a trade-off between short-term economic expediency and"—

**The Speaker:** I've told the member, don't—

**Ms Churley:** It's about water.

**The Speaker:** I said you can't get into reading directly from that. I've made my ruling. I'd appreciate your co-operation. Sorry for the interruption. Continue.

**Ms Churley:** Mr Speaker, I am speaking about water, a life-and-death issue here. Today is the anniversary of the death of people in Walkerton. The government today introduced, and it's now passed without any debate—

*Interjections.*

**Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio):** You agreed.

**Ms Churley:** Absolutely, but I am talking here—

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock. Will the member take her seat. The chief government whip, come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** You're close enough; I can hear you in my right ear. Sorry for the interruption. The member for Toronto-Danforth.

**Ms Churley:** Mr Speaker, the government members don't understand the connection I am making between what happened in Walkerton and the importance of the protection of the Oak Ridges moraine, but indeed the protection of all the environmentally sensitive land across this province, which relates to protection of water. If they listen carefully, they will see the very direct connection that I am making here. The NDP brought in a green planning act, which made sure that environmentally sensitive areas across the entire province were kept safe and protected so that our drinking water would be protected.

This government gutted that act. It brought us to the mess we've had over the Oak Ridges moraine. There are messes all across the rest of the province with boil-water notices. We need a green planning act brought back.

**The Speaker:** I'm afraid the member's time is up. Order. I'm afraid the member's time is up. Last warning to the member. I'm going to name her. If you want to be thrown out, continue on when I stand. I ask you to stop, please. I was very patient. Your time is up. Thank you very much.

## ANNIVERSARY OF WALKERTON TRAGEDY

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like unanimous consent to have a moment's silence for the people of Walkerton who suffered so much a year ago in the tragedy.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed. Would all of the members and the guests in the gallery kindly rise for a moment of silence.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker:** I thank all members and I thank our friends in the gallery.

## VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Just before we begin question period today, in the members' gallery east we're pleased to welcome Mr Geoff Scott, the former federal member of Parliament for the riding of Hamilton-Wentworth. Please join in welcoming our special guest.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** My question is for the Minister of Education. In my hands I have a letter that was written in January 2000. It's a letter from Mike Harris to Dalton McGuinty. In the letter, Mike Harris says that denominational school funding would—and I'd like to quote from the letter—"fragment and weaken our public education system in Ontario."

Mike Harris also says that the provision of denominational school funding would "remove from our existing public education system at least \$300 million per year, with some estimates as high as \$700 million." He concludes the letter by saying, "Obviously, such an action would" run directly "counter to Ontario's long-standing commitment to public education."

Minister, we're distributing the letter to all the government members so that they'll see what their leader has said to my leader. I'd like to know why a voucher for private schools appeared in the budget, counter to what your leader believes, and I want to know exactly what changed between this letter written by Mike Harris and the time that budget was tabled in this House.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** First of all I would like to correct what the honourable member said. There is no voucher program in the budget that was tabled and passed in this House.

Second, during the pre-budget consultations it was very clear that in respecting parental choice, if we were going to do it in the public system as we stated we would, it was also the appropriate thing to respect the choice those parents might wish to make by sending their children to independent schools. It's a matter of parental choice. This government respects that. We believed it was important to put that respect into action.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Minister, we want to know what changed, because here's a letter you wrote in January 2000 to the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy. I'll quote from this letter directly: "While the government recognizes the right of parents to choose alternative forms of education for their children, it continues to have no plans to provide funding to private religious schools or to parents of children that attend such schools. As was set out in the submission to the UN, extending funding to religious private schools would result in fragmentation of the education system in Ontario and undermine the goal of universal access to education."

To the Minister of Education, we need to know exactly what happened between the time that you penned this letter to the federal government and the tabling of the budget that includes a private voucher system for schools in Ontario, the largest change in public education in the history of the province.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I repeat that this is not a voucher program. This is a tax credit which recognizes that some

parents choose to educate their children in independent schools. When those groups came forward during the pre-budget consultations, it was the conclusion of this government that we had to respect that choice. I know your leader has said very clearly that he doesn't respect that choice, he will take that choice away from those parents, should he be elected—heaven forbid and God help us all—but we do respect that choice, and the tax credit proposal of the budget does indeed put that commitment, that respect, into action.

There is no question about this government's commitment to the public education system. We have increased funding. We have put in higher standards. We have taken steps that parents have said to us were necessary to make the public education system a better system. That commitment remains.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Just to review that letter from the Premier, he said, "Remove from our existing public education system at least \$300 million ... with some estimates as high as \$700 million," again, from the public education system—his words; your leader—and then you go on to say in your own letter that you agree it would result in the fragmentation of the education system.

Minister, we demand an answer on behalf of 2.2 million children in the public education system. How could you write a letter like this in January 2000, how can the Premier write such a letter acknowledging the fragmentation of the system, and today in this House you dare to give a self-righteous answer in terms of your support for a private voucher system?

1440

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** No one is proposing a voucher system, and let's be very clear about that. What we have is a tax credit for partial fees that recognizes and respects parental choice.

I should also point out to the honourable members across the way—

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** If she'd be quiet, she could listen to the answer.

Public education is a bedrock building foundation in this province for our economic prosperity, for our future quality of life. That's why we have spent so much money on public education. We continue to increase that investment. That's why we will continue to do that.

The scaremongering from the other side of the House is—when you look at what has happened in other provinces, they support independent schools in those provinces. It has not destroyed the public education system. This government would not support destroying the public education system. We will continue new investment, standards, curriculum, testing—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I'm afraid the minister's time is up. New question.

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** I have a question for the Minister of Education. I think the parents and students in the public education system know how truly hollow the rhetoric coming from the minister is.

Minister, you're entrusted to ensure that every school that receives tax dollars is up to a standard. That's your job in this House. I've got here Bill 45. Bill 45 is your private schools voucher bill. But the power to set criteria and standards for private schools isn't given to you; in fact, it's not even given to us here in the Legislature. It's given to the finance minister, Jim Flaherty. It can't be clearer. Either you've abdicated your responsibility as Minister of Education or you've been shut out of it.

Minister, will you tell us, is it the Minister of Finance from now on who is deciding education policy in the province of Ontario?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you to the honourable member, who supports funding for independent schools, for that question. The last time I checked, tax policy initiatives were released by governments in budgets. The last time I checked, legislation to implement tax credit policies was put forward not by the Minister of Education but by the Minister of Finance. That has always been the way tax policy is done in this province, in this Legislature, and I know that is the way their finance ministers did it as well.

**Mr Kennedy:** The double standard from the minister is truly startling. This is a minister who is prepared to abuse public schools right, left and centre, to make them fill in all manner of forms for this Soviet-style education you brought in, which we know now is for one purpose: to drive kids out of public education and into your new private schools.

Minister, you told us all week not to worry about standards or accountability, and then you said maybe there will be new standards. But we now know the truth. It's not your decision. You don't get to decide. Instead, Jim Flaherty, and just Jim Flaherty, gets to decide what kind of schools, what kind of children, what kind of money flows.

There are people all around the province who look to you: the 2.1 million students, foremost, mentioned by my colleague. Why have you given up their needs and rolled over to Jim Flaherty, the Minister of Finance, and let him run education in this province?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I confess: I'm not a tax policy expert. My Ministry of Education is in charge of education policy, not tax policy. Let's be very clear about that. The education policy is to set higher standards that this ministry, this government has brought in. Those accountability standards that the honourable member, that even Earl Manners now admits are good—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Minister of Education, sorry to interrupt. The member for Windsor West, come to order, please. Sorry, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Those same education standards that you are now trumpeting as so important are the same education standards that your party voted against every single time we brought in legislation to set those higher standards for the public education system, because we do care about the public system, we do recognize its

importance and we are continuing to take the steps that will ensure that that system gets better.

No one is proposing a voucher system, no one is proposing to take one penny out of the public education system, because it needs more dollars, more new investments, the kind of new investments we made this year in the budget, the kind of new investments—

**The Speaker:** I'm afraid the minister's time is up. Final supplementary.

**Mr Kennedy:** Let me tell you why this is important: because in this province, Minister, there are people who simply don't trust your neo-Conservative finance minister to make the decisions all by himself to bring in a private voucher system that no state in the US has even brought in, a tax credit like this to support private schools.

Jenna Pilon is 15 years old and she's a student in Huntsville, Ontario. She says to you, Minister, "If you think you've done all you possibly can in public education and this is the best children can receive, you'd better take a good look around." She wants you to stand up—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Kennedy:** What Jenna Pilon wants and what the people concerned with public education want is for you and the officials in your ministry, who are supposed to know what education is about, who are supposed to know what curriculum is about, to stand up for public education.

Minister, it might even be that this private voucher plan wasn't your idea—that's possible—but can you justify being the Minister of Education and standing idly by when there is no protection for these schools, for those students, and when it's—

**The Speaker:** The member's time is up. Minister of Education.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** There goes the honourable member, the member of the Liberal Party, denigrating parents who choose to educate their children in an independent school. This government respects that.

The honourable member says, "Stand up for public education." We did. We introduced legislation to protect special-needs funding, to set higher standards, to bring in standardized testing, to bring in teacher testing, to bring in a number of initiatives which parents told us the system needed to be better. We brought it in. We had to fight them to do it—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Parkdale-High Park, come to order, please.

Sorry. Was the minister finished?

The member for Trinity-Spadina.

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In my member's statement today, I mentioned the visitors from the Philippines. They are now in the gallery with us today, and I'd like to recognize them.

**The Speaker:** The member for Trinity-Spadina. Sorry for the interruption.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** My question is to the Minister of Education. The executive director of the Ontario Federation of Independent Schools acknowledged that some Christian schools teach that homosexuality is not “normal.” Are you going to fund private schools that teach children that homosexuality is abnormal?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, as the honourable member knows, there are laws in this province against intolerance, against teaching intolerance. Those laws will continue to be enforced in this province.

Again, this government understands that it is parents who make the decisions about what happens to their children in the classroom. As the honourable member should know, coming from Toronto, there are frequently serious, significant debates in the public system where parents may not agree with what a teacher or a school board is teaching their child in the classroom. It happens in the public system every day of the week. Do you know what? The laws are very clear: parents have a choice. Parents can make decisions for their children. We think that's a very important principle in education policy. We think it's an important principle in tax policy. We think it's a very important principle for any government to respect. Obviously the members on the opposite side—

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up. Supplementary.

**Mr Marchese:** Choice to discriminate is not the choice of most Ontarians. What we're saying is that there are troubling questions about intolerance, segregation and fragmentation that your scheme might produce among our children. It concerns us to the extent that we're saying you need to permit public hearings on this issue because there are troubling questions. You can't just listen to your special interest lobbyists. You've got to listen to regular people on this particular issue to tell you what they think about the matter of giving public dollars to private schools.

We asked you yesterday, and we didn't get an answer. Why is your party, the party that has demanded public hearings in the past the last time a change of this magnitude was made in education in Ontario, not at the moment agreeing with us that we need desperately to have public hearings on this issue? Just answer that question. It's very simple.

1450

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, let's be very clear to the honourable member, who may have missed this in his briefings on law in this province, there are laws against intolerance. There are laws against hate. There are laws against discrimination. It is against the law. I would hope in any community where that kind of thing is occurring that those laws are enforced.

Secondly, I find it insulting on behalf of all of those hard-working Ontario families out there that somehow or other the honourable member wants to divide up “regular” people based on their choice in education. Talk about discrimination. If you choose to have your child in the public system, you're OK. If you choose to have your

child in another system, in a religious system, somehow or other that's not OK. I find that approach objectionable.

**Mr Marchese:** The honourable member may have misunderstood, and perhaps deliberately, I don't know, but I was talking about giving regular Ontarians an opportunity to be heard, not the regular kind of special interest lobbyists who come after you. That was the point I made.

On the issue of choice, I remind you of the quote I read a couple of days ago and which our leader read about what you said on this matter: “We've been very clear that our goal is a good quality public education, and the estimates of \$300 million needed to fund religious schools would be \$300 million that would come out of the public school system.” If that's scaremongering, that's what you were doing a while ago. I'm not doing that. I'm not saying this; you said that. We were equally afraid of this \$300 million being taken out of public education to divert it to the private system. I am echoing what you were saying, Minister. I'm not saying anything different.

I'm saying to you, if you agree with me in terms of what you said about six months ago, let's have the public hearings. Come to our meeting tonight at 6 o'clock where you're going to have educators, parents and students speak about defence for a public system and against public dollars for a private system. Will you come tonight to do that?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, I regret I can't come tonight because I have a previous commitment for a public meeting in my own riding. Thank you very much. I'm sorry, I can't come. But I have written to your leader, and I have said I'd be very happy to hear about the results of that discussion tonight.

The other thing I would like to say is that I said I would not support taking \$300 million out of the public education system. I will say it again. I do not support taking one red cent out of the public education system. That is why we announced over—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Minister, take her seat. This is now the last warning for the member for Windsor West. If she continues, she's going to be thrown out. Sorry, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. That is why I advocate for more money for the public education system, for higher standards for public education, and I will continue to do that because that is my job.

## HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** My question is to the Acting Premier. Minister, last year Ontario hospitals' operating budgets were funded at the level of \$8.5 billion. In last week's budget, you announced \$8.4 billion for the operating budgets of Ontario hospitals. That's a decrease of \$100 million at a time when they were already facing a challenge of \$650 million in deficits, at a time when they're facing a shortage of 12,000 nurses. I'd like to ask you a very simple question.

How would you advise Ontario hospitals to cut \$750 million from their operating budgets, hire 12,000 new nurses and provide quality patient care at the same time?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I know the associate Minister of Health wants to answer this.

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]):** Let me say very clearly that the hospital sector within the province of Ontario has had substantial increases in the last two years in the hospital system. Health care as a whole has increased by 5.4% this year. Hospitals increased by about 25% in the last two years. This government has made a commitment to health care, it's made a commitment to hospitals and it's made a commitment to nurses in Ontario. Each of these services are essential services, and the Mike Harris government supports all of them.

**Ms Lankin:** Lovely words, Minister. I'm sure everybody feels so much better now, but the nurses who are here in the gallery today, the nurses who attended outside today and went to the Premier's office and delivered over 10,000 postcards in protest of your treatment of nurses in this province, who have delivered petitions with over 10,000 signatures, demanding that your government fund hospitals for an appropriate settlement for nurses, won't buy a single word of what you just said. Hospitals are facing \$750 million in deficits. You have cut their operating budgets by \$100 million. We are 12,000 nurses short in the province. You cannot square that circle with nice words.

I ask you again: how do you advise the hospitals of this province to continue to provide patient care for the patient needs in our province while they cut \$750 million from their budgets and they attempt to hire 12,000 new nurses?

**Hon Mrs Johns:** Let me say that I and the Mike Harris government value the important work that nurses do in Ontario. They do a very important service, a terrific job for the province, and we're very grateful for that.

To show our commitment to the nurses of the province, we created a nursing task force in 1998 that looked at what we could do to help nurses. They addressed issues of nursing supply and what we could do. We invested \$375 million to ensure that there were enough nurses in the system, to make sure that they were there for the future. We not only invested it for one year; we invested that money long-term to ensure that we had the proper support for nurses in this province, because we believe in what they do. The Mike Harris government believes in nurses in the province of Ontario.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** My question is to the Minister of Education, and it concerns her government's educational tax credit policy. I have in my hand a copy of the bill that will turn your government's private school tax credit policy into law. According to this bill, it is very clear that all details

regarding the eligibility of private school students for this new tax credit will be determined in regulations to be passed by your cabinet.

Minister, will you please tell this Legislature today specifically what these cabinet regulations will say in these areas: will these regulations require that any and all private schools eligible to receive students with this tax credit will and must hire provincially certified teachers, that these private schools will also be required to fully implement the Ministry of Education curriculum, that these private schools must accept regular and rigorous Ministry of Education inspection, and that these private schools must also accept public governance?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** The budget made very clear that there will be consultations and discussions about how to implement tax credit policy, as there usually is. I would thank the honourable member for his recommendations to that discussion.

**Mr Conway:** We are but weeks away from the beginning of a school year in which this new private school educational tax credit policy is going to apply. It's a matter of weeks and months. The minister has clear responsibilities under section 8 of the Education Act, and her government talks about accountability of public funds and standards for educational outcomes in the province.

I want to know, and the people and the parents of Ontario have a right to know, now, will this government require that any private school eligible to receive students whose parents will qualify for this educational tax credit will be expected, as a minimum, to hire certified teachers, to fully implement the provincial Ministry of Education curriculum, and that these private schools must also accept rigorous Ministry of Education inspection? Will you give this Legislature a guarantee that those requirements of accountability and educational standards will be a minimum in these guidelines that presumably will be available and in effect for September of this year? 1500

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I would like to thank the honourable member for his support of our educational policies in this government and the standards that we have set.

I would also like to assure the honourable member that I do agree that parents have a right to know, that parents, when they make decisions about where they wish to send their child for education, need to know.

I would also again repeat: he's made recommendations about where the Liberal Party is coming from on this. I find it a little interesting that on the one hand he's now arguing that parents have the right to know, that he thinks that should be a principle for policy. I do agree with that. But when the push comes to shove, do you respect what those parents might decide if they have the right to know? No. You want to take that decision-making power away from parents. You are very clear. You do not respect that parental choice. You have promised to take it away from parents.

## SMART GROWTH STRATEGY

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Two years ago I called for a freeze on development on the Oak Ridges moraine and a consultation with all the stakeholders to determine the best long-term strategy to protect the environmentally sensitive portions of that important land feature. Since then, to say the least, I have had a vested interest in the outcome of the debate that ensued.

Today you announced a six-month freeze on development on the Oak Ridges moraine, and I understand that you intend to use this time for intensive consultations to determine the appropriate actions to take. I know that your announcement will continue to confound the skeptics who have, as recently as yesterday, insisted that our government was unwilling to take on the extraordinarily complex and important task of laying out a long-range strategy to protect the moraine, just like the vision we have shown in protecting and expanding the Rouge Park and hundreds of other parks all across Ontario.

Minister, my question is about the important consultation process. Can you tell this House with whom you plan to consult, and if my constituents and others who are truly committed to reaching a fair consensus on the future of the moraine want to participate in the consultation process, how can they get involved?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I want to thank the member from Scarborough East for his question. I know he's been working hard on this issue for quite some time, and I welcome his input.

Today I want to thank the members of the Legislature as well for granting passage of first, second and third reading of this bill, but I want to caution all members that this is really just the first step on how we reach a consensus on what needs to be protected, how it should be protected, what areas should be developed, how they should go forward with clear and certain rules on doing that. In the consultation process, thanks to the Legislature approving the bill on first, second and third reading, we can begin that implementation earlier than anticipated. The details will follow.

What we want to try to do is have a round-table consultation with those involved and public input to get people together, similar to our Lands for Life process, which at the time, you'll recall, was greeted with cynicism from the Liberals. I'm glad to see they've learned that we do care about the environment and are capable of implementing these moves.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Thank you for your answer, Minister. I want to congratulate you and all the cabinet for showing the courage and vision to commit to this important initiative and to move, as no previous government has, to bring into effect the long-term planning policies that will find a balance between the protection of our environment and the need to manage growth.

Two weeks ago, this Legislature gave second reading approval to my private member's bill which called for the same long-range planning exercise. I can't begin to thank you for building on the suggestions in that bill and moving forward on the final resolution of the debate on the future of the moraine. My bill went further, though, and indicated that, as part of Smart Growth, if we were to control unfettered urban sprawl, we had to offset that with measures to encourage urban intensification, including a review of the treatment of brownfield sites. I know you also introduced a bill earlier today that seeks to clarify the rules surrounding the redevelopment of brownfield sites, and this will obviously reduce the pressure to develop green spaces.

Minister, can you tell me how this second bill ties in to the protection of the Oak Ridges moraine?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** Today's bills do go together. One is to protect green space and get a balance to allow for growth in a predictable way, and also to protect a legacy for the next generation in terms of open space.

The brownfields legislation is designed to redevelop these contaminated sites by clarifying the rules around how we go about bringing them back into production. In most cases they are located in areas where we have services and we have transportation.

This is an effective and efficient use of our resources, and I encourage the House to pass this bill. I know that you will have questions about it, but I think it will work well in promoting a made-in-Ontario Smart Growth strategy.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** My question is for the Minister of Education. I have heard you talk about your government's responsibility for implementing school curriculum. I've heard you talk about the standards your government claims to be upholding. I've heard you say that you believe in public education.

Minister, I have been an advocate for public education for 33 years now. I really do believe in it. I believe that one of the great strengths of public education is its inclusiveness. I believe that one of the great goals of public education is to bring together people from all backgrounds in this diverse and multicultural province of ours, and I believe that one of our great purposes is to build understanding, tolerance and mutual respect. I believe that teaching and learning these values are as much a part of the curriculum as reading, writing and mathematics.

As you give people a financial incentive to opt out of the public education system, as you move toward the fragmenting of public education that no one would ever have believed could be possible, I ask you today, how do you, as the Minister of Education, ensure that this curriculum of tolerance and mutual respect will be upheld in every school?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** First of all, I agree with the honourable member about the value, the strength and the purpose of public education. I congratulate her on her years of advocating for public education. Our caucus has family members, children, relatives who are teachers, who go to the public education system because we do support the public education system and recognize its value in this society in Ontario.

We will continue to have that respect and that financial support for the public education system and for the values that are incorporated in part in that public education system.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Supplementary?

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** Minister, today the Supreme Court of Canada clarified the right of the provincial government to promote a classroom environment free of bias, prejudice and intolerance in the public school system.

Yesterday morning the member for Thornhill, a leading advocate of your private school voucher system within your government, sponsored a press conference with the leading supporters of your voucher system. One of these supporters, John Vanasselt of the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, said that gays and lesbians are not normal. His comments are harmful to my community and they raise a very serious concern about the introduction of government funding to private schools.

Minister, your earlier answer, that discrimination will be tolerated unless others initiate hate crimes or human rights code challenges, is wholly inadequate. What active efforts will you take to ensure that an environment free of bias, prejudice and intolerance will be created with these public dollars?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, no one in this government supports intolerance, supports discrimination, supports hatred toward any group, and no one in this government has ever said anything to the contrary. I find that suggestion from the honourable member to be highly objectionable.

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## TOURISM

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** My question is directed to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. I read in the National Post just yesterday that according to a poll, most Canadians are not satisfied with airline service in Canada. Fewer than half of those polled said they considered prices to be good or very good. This poll seems to confirm what I hear from time to time from my constituents. They're not happy with the airline service, especially because there's no competition for domestic flights.

Minister, when it costs more to fly from Toronto to Sioux Lookout than it does to fly to the Caribbean and take a full-week cruise with extras, something is indeed seriously wrong. As the minister responsible for promoting the tourism industry in Ontario, can you tell me what

impact customer dissatisfaction is having on tourism in Ontario?

**Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation):** I thank the member for Northumberland for his question. He makes a good point: the challenges when it's a lot cheaper to fly to other jurisdictions than flying either within this province or from one point in the country to another.

In answer to his question directly, yes, we're very concerned about the lack of competition in air services, very concerned that monopolies tend to result in higher prices and poorer quality of service. We want as a policy in Ontario to ensure that tourists not only visit Ontario but stay longer and spend more money in our restaurants, hotels and attractions.

I've heard the same from tourism ministers from coast to coast. Earlier this week we had the provincial and territorial tourism ministers' meeting all united on this. Whether from Yukon, New Brunswick, Ontario or Quebec, we are very concerned about the lack of competition in the airline industry. We want to ensure that airlines are open, accessible and responsive to our \$50-billion national tourism industry. That's why we're calling on some federal action, to make sure there is competition and fair and reasonable prices in the airline business.

**Mr Galt:** I appreciate the answer from the minister and the importance of holding the feds' feet to the fire. But since they're Liberals, what can we really expect? We've seen what happened in health care, starting out with 50-50 and it got down to 7% and it's back up to about 11%. We've seen what they did for the grain and oilseed producers—they really only went halfway—and now they're after a salary that's more than twice what we get as MPPs.

Minister, when I hear complaints about the prices and services on airlines in Canada, I wonder if there's anything that we as a provincial government can do about it. Did any plan of action come out of your discussion with your provincial colleagues about how to address this particular issue?

**Hon Mr Hudak:** I think we can always make every effort possible to encourage the federal government to act to ensure that the airlines are open and accessible, with low prices. There is some concern, though. One of the presenters at our tourism ministers' meeting indicated that David Collenette, the Minister of Transport, said that we've seen a remarkable job by Air Canada. I don't think members of this House are going to agree with that assessment of the competition in the airline business.

We have to look at the big picture. It's not simply the airline industry that should be the only concern for airline restructuring. Obviously, the \$50-billion national tourism industry should play a major role in addressing this important issue.

So we're united, each of the ministers in the territories and the provinces, in calling on action at the federal level. In fact, we're going to ask industry minister Brian Tobin. We see an opportunity for him to champion at the cabinet table these issues of tourism, the many jobs and

the great potential in this industry. We'll be arranging that meeting in the near future.

### ANNIVERSARY OF WALKERTON TRAGEDY

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** I have a question for the acting Premier. This Sunday the people of Walkerton are holding events to mark the first anniversary of the Walkerton tainted water tragedy in which seven people died, one of whom was a two-year-old child. The Minister of the Environment has said that neither she nor the Premier is going to Walkerton on that day. Indeed, as I understand it, your government is doing nothing to commemorate or pay tribute to the dead or take any action whatsoever for that day and on that day. Can you confirm that this is the truth?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Walkerton, I think everyone in this House and everyone in the province knows, was a very tragic and unfortunate event, and our thoughts continue to be with the community of Walkerton. As the anniversary approaches, our thoughts and prayers are especially with those who lost family members in this tragedy.

I understand that the various community groups have organized events to mark the anniversary. Again, our thoughts are with the community at the time, and I'm sure it will be a very difficult time.

I know that our government, through various contacts and along with the local member, has talked to the community. This is the course they would like us to play in this event. They want to make this a community event that's private. They do not want to see this turned into in any way a political statement. This is a time for the community to come together and go through their grief as a community.

**Ms Churley:** Earlier I wanted to read a statement which was sent to me by people who live in Walkerton and I couldn't get unanimous consent to relay some of the voices of the people of Walkerton. They talk about ongoing problems with boil-water alerts. In fact, in the Grey-Owen Sound area that's happening right now.

We had a report just released from OPSEU. The front-line workers say that the environment budget and staffing are still far below the levels they were before your government launched its attack to cripple the environment ministry. Even since the latest \$25 million was put in, the funding level is still about \$43 million less than when you were first elected. The fact is, the only reason the minister can talk about an increase in prosecutions is because you had cut it to an all-time low.

Minister, what I'm asking you to do today, for the people of Walkerton and the people across the province, is to commit to putting 500 new workers as outlined in a report from your own ministry and to bringing the budget up to at least the levels that they were in 1994. Would you do that?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I would just like to thank the member. I know that she, like all members of this Legis-

lature, understands the magnitude of the tragedy that has affected the community of Walkerton.

I would just like to remind her—and I know that she's aware, like all members of the House—that this government has done a tremendous amount of work with the municipality over the last year. We've worked with the municipality to ensure that the water system is being operated—operated a hydrogeological study on the groundwater conditions around the wells in Walkerton, ensured that all buildings in Walkerton were decontaminated, oversaw the installation of the filtration and chlorination treatment systems, and worked with the municipality to make sure that they had the tools to get on with providing the service to the residents in a safe manner.

As the Premier stated at the time, we've been there to help the community in any way that they needed help. I'd just like to say that we appreciated the support we got from all members of this Legislature around that.

### NORTHERN MEDICAL SCHOOL

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** My question is for the Minister of Northern Development. Your government came into northern Ontario today with what was supposed to be an historic announcement, and instead you delivered a devastating blow to all of northwestern Ontario.

You had a consensus across all of the north that a new medical school based jointly in Thunder Bay and Sudbury is absolutely essential if we are ever going to solve the problem of doctor shortages in the north. You had a made-in-the-north solution put forward with the support of our universities, our municipalities, our chambers of commerce, our doctors. You had a report from your own expert panel that said you should set up three new centres for medical training in Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Windsor. You ignored all of it.

Minister, I have lots of questions today. Why have you ignored your own expert panel recommendations? Why have you decided that you know better than northerners what will work in the north? Why have you shut half of northern Ontario right out of your plans?

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** I want to say today that the Mike Harris government is firmly committed to addressing the health care needs of the people of northern Ontario. It was this government that was the first government in this province to recognize the challenges faced by northerners in retaining and recruiting health care professionals, but also working toward a made-in-northern-Ontario medical school, and that is what we did. We listened to the people of northern Ontario and we responded with that made-in-northern-Ontario solution.

But I tell you today it's all about bringing doctors to the north. It's not about Sudbury versus Thunder Bay and it's not about Laurentian versus Lakehead. It's about bringing doctors to the north. While your caucus continues to fight about which side is going to be where in

northern Ontario, we'll be there fighting on behalf of health care for northerners.

**Mrs McLeod:** The very people who have worked their hearts out on that made-in-northern-Ontario solution are calling your announcement today an abandonment. They're calling it a betrayal.

Minister, if you wanted to do something about doctor shortages you'd have to understand the problem, and you're clearly not prepared to do that. We need to train doctors where they are desperately needed. That's in the northwest and the northeast and the southwest. We need incentives for new doctors to come and practise in places where they are needed. Your expert panel said there should be \$10 million committed right now, this year, to put in place new incentives to bring doctors into, and keep them in, our communities. We need to get foreign-trained doctors licensed faster so they can get into our communities right now. Your expert panel said that you had to start doing that right now, today. You have not done any of that, and your government has not understood how urgent this situation is.

1520

Minister, I ask you today, given this betrayal, given this abandonment of the made-in-the-north solution, will you get on a plane with me later on this afternoon, will you come to my community and will you explain to the people in my community and in northwestern Ontario why you have let them down so badly on this most urgent issue?

**Hon Mr Newman:** Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, you sat at the cabinet table when you were part of the cabinet of your government. This has been talked about for 30 years in this province. This is the first government to move forward with a made-in-northern-Ontario medical school. You know that.

Let's talk about the announcement today: 55 places in a made-in-northern-Ontario medical school, 20 for northwestern Ontario—that's 20 in Thunder Bay. How you can be against that is beyond belief.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. This week is Community Living Week in Ontario. Over the last number of years I've been very privileged to work closely with the people in my community who provide support for people with developmental disabilities.

The tremendous dedication of these families and caregivers makes a real difference in the lives of tens of thousands of Ontarians. Earlier this week, we had the opportunity to celebrate their successes, but also to talk about what we need to do to make sure that community agencies are ready to help more people reach their full potential.

I know the government announced new funding for developmental services in last week's budget, but I

wonder if the minister can tell us how this money will help to address the pressures that are currently facing the system.

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I want to congratulate the member opposite for her commitment to community living and helping provide support to people with intellectual handicaps in Ontario. She has been one of many members on all sides of the House who have worked actively on this issue.

I was pleased to see in the budget an unparalleled commitment to people with developmental disabilities, the biggest investment we've seen in Canadian history of an increase in support and the capacity of the system to provide help to people with developmental disabilities. Through the announcement contained in the budget, we gave the sector what it wanted: a multi-year strategy, a plan to build and provide more funding to help ensure that we deliver good quality care to people with a developmental disability in this province, to provide more opportunity for respite care, and particularly to support families in their own homes when they have to work with an adult child or a family member with a developmental disability.

I was particularly pleased to see the continued emphasis that this government has placed on helping parents who are aging with an adult child with a development disability, and that's more good news contained in the announcement.

**Ms Mushinski:** Thank you for that response, Minister. But one specific concern that families have consistently raised with me is the supports that are provided for aging parents who care for their adult son or daughter. With an aging population, many families are worried about their ability to care for their children and what may happen to them once they can no longer help them with their day-to-day needs.

Minister, can you tell me what action your ministry will take to make sure these families have the supports they need to continue to provide the best care possible for their children?

**Hon Mr Baird:** We can do a number of things. We can provide more supports to these aging families in their own home: supports like respite care, supports through increases in special services at home, supports to provide more residential or respite out-of-home care.

We can also provide more residential support when an aging family isn't able to provide care. This can be particularly important with an aging parent, 80 or 82 years old, as many of the parents I meet with each and every day are. They want to be able to go to bed with the confidence to know that if the next morning they are not able to provide the help to those folks in their life, there will be someone else there to do it for them. They want to have the confidence to be able to do that. I was pleased the budget was able to take a big step forward in that regard.

I was also pleased to hear the president of the Ontario Liberal Party, Greg Sorbara, say, "They, the government, did some good things for people with developmental disabilities and the developmentally handicapped, that they ought to be congratulated for doing so." It was long overdue.

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** My question is for the Minister of Health, who is not here. I know he's busy, so I'll give a chance to the Acting Premier. Minister, first we had hospital closings. Then we had hospital amalgamations and closings. I have to say this is not a very healthy trend for the people of my riding or for the people of the northwest area of Toronto.

Insidious rumours persist that the three Humber River Regional Hospital sites—the Finch, Keele and Church sites—will close and be replaced by a new regional superhospital. The community is genuinely alarmed to hear this news. Emergency services will be moving farther away, emergency lineups will be growing even longer and other hospital services, hospital care, will be deteriorating even more so.

On top of that, the catchment area has been widened too, from Bloor in the south all the way to Bolton, Nobleton and Schomberg in the north.

Minister, I would like you today in the House to appease the people of York West and the people in the northwest area of Toronto. I'm asking you today to stop the insane idea of closing three community hospitals.

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I know the associate minister of health wants to answer this.

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]):** I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question. Let me say that we have gone through a long process of hospital restructuring in Ontario. There's been much consulting that has gone on—we had an independent commission that came forward, we have consulted with the people of the province—and we certainly take every opinion, every desire of the community into account. We move forward to make sure the main goal is that we provide quality health care to the people of the province as close to home as can be. But it's important to have quality, good health care close to home, and that's the objective of the Mike Harris government.

**Mr Sergio:** With all due respect to the associate minister, evidently she is not aware of what's going on in the area. I'd like to address my supplementary question to the Acting Premier.

The writing is on the wall, Minister, and now you can see why the community is up in arms and very apprehensive. Let alone the funding cuts which have been decimating the health care system and hospital care, let alone the closing of three community hospitals, we now fear, the community now fears, that you will agree to build a new regional superhospital worth some \$300 mil-

lion or so and then privatize it—let a private, for-profit company run a new regional hospital. I want you today to make a commitment to the House, to the people of York West and to the people in the northwest area that you or your government will never allow the closing of the three community hospitals, the building of a new regional hospital, and that you will never privatize it. Will you make that commitment today?

**Hon Mrs Johns:** Let me correct the question. First of all, let me say very clearly that hospitals in the last two years have not been cut by the Mike Harris government. There has been a continued commitment to hospitals and to health care in this province. In fact, since 1995, when we were elected, the health care budget has gone from \$17 billion to \$23 billion. As the member opposite talks, Humber River Regional Hospital has requested approval to develop a new site.

What we've done, as opposed to just approving that site, is ask the Toronto District Health Council to review this proposal. We've asked them to get local and regional input so they can give good advice to the ministry. And we await that local advice, because we've always waited for local advice in the province. That's the way we make sure the communities are supportive of every decision we make in health care.

1530

### HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** I have a question for the Minister of Transportation. Minister, over the last 20 or 25 years, Kitchener, which forms part of Waterloo region—and Waterloo region, as you probably know, is one of the most important economic regions in this whole country—has been growing dramatically, as has the region. With that growth, there has been significant growth in the number of automobiles on the roads and the area surrounding it as well, not just the region. Minister, congestion and gridlock are not restricted to Toronto. Congestion and gridlock are known in my riding as well, but we don't whine and gripe like Toronto does.

What are you doing to make sure that the highways in my community are safe and can take on this increased capacity?

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** I thank the member for the question. A modern transportation network is vital to safety and to continued economic prosperity, not only in Ontario but in Kitchener and also Toronto. I appreciate the member's interest in this issue. By the end of this fiscal year, the Harris government will have invested more than \$6 billion in highway capital programs. This investment level is unprecedented in the province's history. The province's highway system is in its best state of repair since the mid-1980s, and our safety record is wonderful: the second-safest roads in Canada.

In the 2001 budget, our government announced a significant investment in strategic infrastructure in provin-

cial highways, transportation and interregional transit. In fact, this year's highway and interregional transit capital budget is approximately \$1 billion.

As for the member's safety concerns, my ministry created the Ontario Advisory Group on Safe Driving in the fall of 1999 to assess the best ways to combat—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The minister's time is up, I'm afraid. Supplementary.

**Mr Wettnauer:** Minister, I think you missed my first question. There was a specific reason I asked that question. I know what we've done as a government for all of Ontario, but I'm talking about my riding. In my riding, there is a section of Highway 8 at Conestoga Parkway that has been particularly problematic, especially during the rush hour.

I want you to know that this is one of the busiest highway intersections in all of Ontario. It has one of the highest accident rates of any highway intersection in all of Ontario. It is not uncommon for me to take half an hour to drive from Highway 401 to this intersection, which is a distance of five kilometres.

Traffic moving westbound from Conestoga Parkway must share the same lane as traffic entering and exiting Highway 8, but the distance between the on and off ramps is too short to accommodate this traffic. What are you going to do to address this issue?

**Hon Mr Clark:** My ministry is aware of this issue and is now working to address the situation. Due to the extent of the work needed for reconstruction of the Highway 8 and Conestoga Parkway interchange, it was split into two phases. I'm pleased to report that phase one, the widening of the parkway, was completed in the summer of 2000, at a cost of \$22 million.

To address the safety and operational concerns of the existing interchange, including the short distance between the westbound entrance and the exit ramps, it's necessary to enter construction for phase two. Phase two involves widening a section of Highway 8 from four to eight lanes and construction of a new interchange, including a direct exit ramp. The cost of the project will be \$33 million. I would like to note for the member that we are planning to phase the construction in over a three-year period. This will ensure that traffic interruptions are minimized and that the construction zone will be safe for the workers.

#### NORTHERN MEDICAL SCHOOL

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, why did your government today deny the—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order.

**Mr Bisson:** My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. The question is very simple. Why did your government reject the made-in-northern-Ontario solution that would have proposed that the northern medical school be established in two sites,

one in Sudbury, one in Thunder Bay? Why did you decide to go to one?

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** In fact, the announcement today about the made-in-northern-Ontario medical school, 55 spots for people to learn to become doctors in the north at this made-in-northern-Ontario medical school, has been well received. The announcement today dealt with the main location being at Sudbury's Laurentian University, also there being a clinical education campus in Thunder Bay.

I know that members of the opposition parties have spoken in favour of more medical school spaces in the province. The Minister of Health today announced further medical school spaces, and in fact 55 of those will be at the new medical school in northern Ontario.

**The Speaker:** The time for question period is over.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: You can help me with this; this is a ruling. Is it possible for me to request on behalf of the member for Kitchener Centre a late show? I would like to request that on his behalf to help him out.

**The Speaker:** It is not. I looked for you because I figured it was petition time and you would be first up.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Pursuant to standing order 55, I have the statement of business of the House for the week of May 28:

Monday afternoon we will continue debate on Bill 30. Monday evening we will be doing second reading debate of Bill 45.

Tuesday afternoon we will continue debate on Bill 30. Tuesday evening we will continue debate on Bill 45.

Wednesday afternoon we will continue debate on Bill 30. Wednesday evening we will continue debate on Bill 45.

Thursday morning during private members' business we will discuss ballot items 9 and 10, and other business will be determined at a later date.

#### PETITIONS

#### NURSES

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the nurses of Ontario are seeking relief from heavy workloads, which have contributed to unsafe conditions for patients and have increased the risk of injury to nurses; and

"Whereas there is a chronic nursing shortage in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has failed to live up to its commitment to provide safe, high quality care for patients;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Ontario government take positive action to ensure that our communities have enough nursing staff to provide patients with the care they need. The Ontario government must:

"Ensure wages and benefits are competitive and value all nurses for their dedication and commitment; ensure there are full-time and regular part-time jobs available for nurses in hospitals, nursing homes and the community; ensure government revenues fund health care, not tax cuts; ensure front-line nurses play a key role in health reform decisions."

These petitions have been signed by no less than 9,820 nurses across this province. I affix my signature in full agreement with their concerns, and that is shared by all members of our caucus.

#### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition which reads as follows:

"Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

"Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion, is best for their children; and

"Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as those practised in the Montessori and Waldorf schools are best for their children; and

"Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

"Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

"Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent schools as soon as possible."

#### WATER EXTRACTION

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the residents and cottagers of Bob's Lake, strenuously object to the permit issued by the Ministry of the Environment to OMYA Inc to remove 1.5 million litres of water per day from the Tay River without adequate assessment of the consequences and without adequate consultation with the public and those people and groups who have expertise and interest; and

"Whereas it is our belief that this water-taking will drastically impact the environment and seriously affect the water levels in Bob's Lake and Christie Lake;

"Whereas Bob's Lake and the Tay River watersheds are already highly stressed by the historic responsibility of Parks Canada to use Bob's Lake as a reservoir for the Rideau Canal; and

"Whereas the movement of water from the lake through the watershed for navigation purposes in the canal provides sufficient stress and problems for the lake, and this water-taking permit will only compound the stresses on the waterway;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We request that this permit be rescinded until a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of this water-taking permit by OMYA Inc on the environment, the water levels and the water needs of these communities is complete. An independent, non-partisan body should undertake this evaluation."

I agree with this petition and will affix my signature to it.

1540

#### DIABETES TREATMENT

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further petitions? The Chair recognizes the member for Scarborough—

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** Scarborough Centre. The centre of the universe.

I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas over 500,000 people in Ontario have diabetes; and

"Whereas to the expense of treating diabetes, many people cannot afford the ongoing expense of treating diabetes, and if left untreated or improperly managed, diabetes can lead to blindness, vascular disease, kidney disease, neuropathy and other problems; and

"Whereas today, more than ever before, people with diabetes can expect to live active, independent and vital lives if they make a lifelong commitment to careful management of the disease; and

"Whereas by providing the resources to successfully manage this disease, the government can ensure more efficient health care for people with diabetes at a reduced cost to the health care system;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all diabetic supplies as prescribed by an endocrinologist be covered under the Ontario health insurance plan."

I am pleased to attach my signature to this petition.

#### NURSES

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the nurses of Ontario are seeking relief from heavy workloads, which have contributed to unsafe conditions for patients and have increased the risk of injury to nurses; and

"Whereas there is a chronic nursing shortage in Ontario;

"Whereas the Ontario government has failed to live up to its commitment to provide safe, high-quality care for patients,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Ontario government take positive action to ensure that our communities have enough nursing staff to provide patients with the care they need. The Ontario government must:

"Ensure wages and benefits are competitive and value all nurses for their dedication and commitment; ensure that there are full-time and regular part-time jobs available for nurses in hospitals, nursing homes and the community; ensure government revenues fund health care, not tax cuts; and ensure front-line nurses play a key role in health reform decisions."

I affix my signature, as I'm in complete agreement.

#### BRAIN TUMOURS

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition signed by 152 people.

"Whereas early detection and treatment of brain tumours are vital to survive from this devastating disease;

"Whereas brain tumours strike people of all ages, from newborns to seniors, crossing all economic, social and ethnic boundaries and all walks of life;

"Whereas brain tumours are the most common cause of solid cancer in children; and

"Whereas brain tumour research, patient and family support services and awareness among the general public are essential to promote early detection and treatment of brain tumours,

"We, the undersigned, therefore respectfully petition the Parliament of Ontario to pass a law proclaiming the month of October in each year as Brain Tumour Awareness Month."

#### NURSES

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the nurses of Ontario are seeking relief from heavy workloads, which have contributed to unsafe conditions for patients and have increased the risk of injury to nurses; and

"Whereas there is a chronic nursing shortage in Ontario;

"Whereas the Ontario government has failed to live up to its commitment to provide safe, high-quality care for patients,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Ontario government take positive action to ensure that our communities have enough nursing staff to provide patients with the care they need. The Ontario government must:

"Ensure wages and benefits are competitive and value all nurses for their dedication and commitment; ensure there are full-time and regular part-time jobs available for nurses in hospitals, nursing homes and the community; ensure government revenues fund health care, not tax cuts; and ensure front-line nurses play a key role in health reform decisions."

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments;

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

I submit this on behalf of my colleague Mr O'Toole.

#### NURSES

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have another petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the nurses of Ontario are seeking relief from heavy workloads, which have contributed to unsafe conditions for patients and have increased the risk of injury to nurses; and

"Whereas there is a chronic nursing shortage in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has failed to live up to its commitment to provide safe, high-quality care for patients;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Ontario government take positive action to ensure that our communities have enough nursing staff to provide patients with the care they need. The Ontario government must:

"Ensure wages and benefits are competitive, and value all nurses for their dedication and commitment; ensure there are full-time and regular part-time jobs available for nurses in hospitals, nursing homes and in the community; ensure government revenues fund health care, not tax

cuts; and ensure front-line nurses play a key role in health reform decisions."

I affix my signature as I'm in complete agreement.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** I have another petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, that reads as follows:

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments; and

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

#### NURSES

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** This petition is from the Bowmanville area to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the nurses of Ontario are seeking relief from heavy workloads, which have contributed to unsafe conditions for patients and have increased the risk of injury to nurses; and

"Whereas there is a chronic nursing shortage in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has failed to live up to its commitment to provide safe, high-quality care for patients;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Ontario government take positive action to ensure that our communities have enough nursing staff to provide patients with the care they need. The Ontario government must:

"Ensure wages and benefits are competitive, and value all nurses for their dedication and commitment; ensure there are full-time and regular part-time jobs available for nurses in hospitals, nursing homes and in the community; ensure government revenues fund health care, not tax cuts; and ensure front-line nurses play a key role in health reform decisions."

I will sign this petition because I completely agree with it.

1550

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I have a petition here that I feel is going to take a minute and 16 seconds to read.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the citizens of Victoria county had no direct say in the creation of the new city of Kawartha Lakes; and

"Whereas the government by regulation and legislation forced the recent amalgamation, against the will of the obvious majority of the people; and

"Whereas the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable local government, nor the provision of better services at reduced costs; and

"Whereas the promise of tax decreases has not been met, based on current assessments; and

"Whereas the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation have already exceeded the promised amount by over three times,

"Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance it has coerced in all sectors."

I've signed that petition.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### REMEDIES FOR ORGANIZED CRIME AND OTHER UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 SUR LES RECOURS POUR CRIME ORGANISÉ ET AUTRES ACTIVITÉS ILLÉGALES

Mr Young moved second reading of the following bill: Bill 30, An Act to provide civil remedies for organized crime and other unlawful activities / Projet de loi 30, Loi prévoyant des recours civils pour crime organisé et autres activités illégales.

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I'm very pleased to be here today to talk about what is indeed a very important piece of legislation. I'll be sharing my time, with your permission, with two of my colleagues: David Tilson, the member of provincial Parliament from Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey, as well as Raminder Gill, from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. I've pretty much exhausted my time.

Let's be very clear. The aim of this legislation is to take the profit out of organized crime. We introduced

similar legislation in the last session and have utilized the time between the point where that session prorogued and this time in order to refine certain portions of the bill.

I'm very pleased to say that if a majority of the members of this assembly choose to vote in favour of this legislation, we in Ontario would have the ability to use 21st-century tactics to deal with what is indeed a 21st-century plague.

I'm going to take a few moments, if I may, to talk about what this bill would do if it is indeed passed by this assembly. There has been a great deal of discussion about the fact that, if passed, this legislation would enable judges to seize, freeze and forfeit to the crown proceeds of unlawful activity. We believe that is the essence of the solution that is needed to combat organized crime.

Let's be very clear. Those who engage in organized crime do so for one primary reason: that is to make money and to gain property. That's the lifeblood of organized crime in this province, in this country and throughout the world. They want money; they want property. This bill strikes at that.

If it is passed, this bill will allow the government to engage in what is in some respects a new, innovative and unprecedented step forward, and in other respects simply utilizes what is an age-old remedy. It will utilize the civil courts to have property returned to its rightful owner.

Let's be very clear: criminal investigations and prosecutions are still going to be the cornerstone of our fight against organized crime. Ontario, though, will pursue wrongdoers and arrange for the return of property at the same time. It will be a parallel piece of legislation.

Our government made a commitment in the Blueprint, the policy that we went to the people of this province with, a commitment that said very clearly that we would come forward and fight organized crime, and we would do so because organized crime is a blight on our society. There are some out there who think that they are not in any way, in any shape or in any form affected by the activities of those criminals. Let me tell you they are wrong. It is not just about having your car stolen or your credit card stolen on a given occasion. Organized crime affects all of us, every person in this province, every person in this country. It affects hard-working people in numerous ways, including by increasing the cost of goods. Costs go up because merchants and others, manufacturers, do not have the ability to gain the revenue that they are entitled to, that they deserve from the proper sales of items.

Another example, one that I suspect every individual within this chamber and almost every individual across this province is affected by is insurance premiums. Insurance premiums go up each and every year at least partially because of the activities of these criminals. When we lose a car we go to our insurer and most of that cost is reimbursed. But it is coming from somewhere. What this bill will do is zero in on the property aspects of that unlawful activity, the profit and the capital of that unlawful activity. By taking this approach, we believe that we will disrupt the activities of organized criminals.

I want to be clear, however: this bill would not be breaking new ground in the sense that it does return property to the rightful owner. Civil law has been used to adjudicate property disputes for as long as common law has existed. In fact, this dates back to the very roots of our modern legal system. But what we are doing here is creating a mechanism whereby individuals who may have only lost \$100 or \$200 or \$1,000 or \$2,000 have some realistic, practical vehicle through which they can have their property returned. Remember what we are talking about here. We are talking about having the government assist individuals in the return of their property. These are the victims, and the government will be helping to return property to those individuals.

The scope of the problem is worthy of some comment. A recent federal government study suggested that between \$5 billion and \$9 billion each and every year is lost—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The Chair recognizes the member for Timmins-James Bay on a point of order.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James) :** Je crois qu'on n'a pas les nombres suffisants pour avoir un débat ici.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you check and see if there's a quorum.

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The Chair recognizes the Attorney General from Willowdale.

1600

**Hon Mr Young:** When I left off I was discussing the scope of this problem, the magnitude of the problem. A recent federal study suggested that between \$5 billion and \$9 billion each and every year is lost by hard-working Canadians as a result of the activities of organized criminals—\$5 billion to \$9 billion. That's roughly the equivalent of this country's exports to Japan in any given year. Japan, by the way, is the third-largest trading partner that this country has.

I mentioned credit card fraud earlier. I say to you that credit card fraud alone costs Canadians \$127 million every year. It gives you some idea about the magnitude of the problem we are dealing with here today.

I also referenced earlier the fact that we need to work in parallel, in conjunction, in collaboration, with our federal government's criminal law dealing with this issue. There have been many occasions where members of this assembly have stood and talked about how they are disappointed in what the federal parliamentarians are doing. It is true that in Ottawa they haven't done nearly enough when it comes to dealing with and making young offenders accountable. It is true that when one talks about criminal law in this country, a matter that is strictly within the federal domain and is controlled by the Liberal Party, there is no truth in sentencing the way that there should be.

But I do want to say that Minister McLellan in Ottawa has indeed accepted many of the proposals that we have made, proposals that I believe will improve the situation—if they pass through the Parliament of this country; they’re currently tabled—and will allow for law enforcement officials to more effectively fight organized crime. I do applaud the federal justice minister, who acknowledges by her action, by tabling this proposed legislation, what I am here to say today. What I am here to say today is it’s not just about drugs and thugs anymore. Organized crime is sophisticated, is modern, is evolving, and in order to combat it effectively we must act in kind. We must act accordingly.

When I announced this legislation with Chief Robertson from the Hamilton police force and Chief Fantino, a representative of victims across this province stood with us. I also had a representative with me from the Ontario Provincial Police. We all agreed that this legislation is necessary.

I should say as well that just as I am supportive of the initiatives that come from Ottawa in relation to the amendments to the Criminal Code, I say to this assembly that in my discussions with Minister McLellan she is supportive of this initiative from the province. She has agreed in her discussions with me that this is an appropriate initiative for a province to take.

Ontario is leading the way. We are the first province to come forward with this type of legislation, but I hope and I have some reason to believe that other provinces will follow suit.

There has been some discussion over the last little while by some critics about whether or not this legislation properly and adequately protects the privacy rights of Ontarians. I want to address that today if I may. I want to talk about the safeguards that have been built into this act, safeguards that I say to you will not and should not cause the people of this province to have any concerns about privacy.

Before I do that, let me say that I owe the Information and Privacy Commissioner of this province a thank you. She has been of enormous assistance to us in the development of this legislation and in the development of the safeguards that exist within this proposed act. Without her assistance, frankly, the bill would not be as good.

To be fair, Dr Cavoukian did initially express some concerns about some gaps, and my predecessor indicated that we would be filling those gaps, we would be filling those voids. That was always our intention. As I say, during the period of time between the point where this Legislature prorogued and this date, we have managed to do so, as Minister Flaherty indicated we would, and with the assistance of Dr Cavoukian.

Let me talk about what Dr Cavoukian was good enough to say in a letter to my ministry very recently. She said, “I am satisfied that these concerns”—those are the concerns about protection of privacy—“have now been addressed.” She goes on to state that this bill “is now a far better bill thanks to your co-operation.”

I want to repeat that I am thankful for the assistance of the commissioner and her staff.

Specifically, this bill would protect individuals in a number of different ways.

First of all, no property, no object will be seized, will be forfeited, will be interfered with in any way, shape or form unless and until a judge decides that is appropriate. There is no reverse onus in this legislation in the way that has been described by others outside of this assembly. In order for any property to be interfered with in any way—whether it’s a lien put on there because it might belong to someone else—it will have to be demonstrated that the individual who has the property doesn’t have title to the property, that it’s not theirs to have. That’s what our civil courts do each and every day across this province and that’s all they’ll be asked to do here.

But if this legislation is passed, there will now be a mechanism, a way of moving forward on behalf of individuals who may have lost relatively small amounts of money so that money can be returned to them. The Attorney General will initiate civil action so that money can be returned to victims. The Attorney General will utilize the services of forensic accountants, investigators and civil prosecutors, civil lawyers, to go to civil court and, on a balance of probabilities, as is always the standard, as is always the test—it has always been the test in civil courts—the same standard will be used to return property to victims.

On some occasions, personal information will be required as part of the process. That information will only be passed on from government officials, will only be transferred, will only be conveyed if the gatekeeper, who will be an independent individual, believes that all the criteria have been met, if the gatekeeper believes that it will not prejudice the individual to an extent that is inappropriate when balanced against the very legitimate purpose of this act. Let me repeat that Dr Cavoukian, the Information and Privacy Commissioner in this province, thinks this is reasonable, as do I.

Furthermore, when it comes to health information, there will be yet a higher standard, a more onerous standard in place before any health information is conveyed. Health information will only be conveyed as part of a court proceeding or with a court order, specifically. One might ask legitimately, why should any health information be conveyed at any time under any circumstances? I understand the question, but the answer is very straightforward, and that is this: unless we as a government have the ability to pursue money that has been lost as a result of health care fraud, as an example, those who engage in that sort of unlawful activity involving OHIP cards or other health-related fraud will have free rein. It will be open season.

If a criminal is wondering what area they should engage in, what practice they should engage in, it will be easy: go into the health care field, because of course there would be no recourse if no information could flow, if no information could be conveyed, but this legislation does permit the transfer of health information on a limited

basis, when necessary, and authorized in the manner that I described, through court processes, or more specifically by order of a judge.

That's necessary because we're talking about returning money and we're talking about returning property to hard-working men and women across this province. That will be done. That compensation will be provided to victims through the Ministry of Finance through a special fund that will be created with any money that is collected, and it will be returned to victims. If we can find a direct victim, then it will go there. If we cannot, then it will go to people in a similar category who have been victimized.

This is not the sort of civil forfeiture legislation and initiative that you might have seen on 60 Minutes or some US newsmagazine show where police and government officials act in a rather cavalier manner. That cannot, that will not happen if this legislation is passed. Every step of the way, the judiciary, the judges, the independent judiciary across this province will be monitoring what's going on, and safeguards will be built in with the gatekeeper and otherwise, as we've talked about.

1610

I think it's very important to remember that while this legislation is a relatively innovative step forward in this country—it hasn't been done before in Canada—it has been done across the world. Before we tabled this legislation, we stopped and took a look at the effect.

I don't have much left, but I want to talk briefly about the experience in Ireland where similar civil forfeiture legislation was passed. In Ireland the experience was a very positive one. We've learned from the expertise that has been developed in that jurisdiction and we've learned from their experience. As a result of discussions with individuals like Detective Superintendent Felix McKenna of the Irish Criminal Assets Bureau, we understand that this legislation, if it is passed, can be a very effective tool to drive organized crime out of this province and hopefully out of this country.

Detective Superintendent McKenna said that shortly after this legislation was passed in that jurisdiction, two major organized crime families got up and left. Why? I come back to where I started. Because the lifeblood of their operations—money, property, the reason for being, the reason for engaging in illegal activity—no longer existed. There was no reason for them to operate there. There was no profit in it. That's why I said at the outset that this legislation, if it is passed, will indeed go some distance to taking the profit out of organized crime.

Let me in conclusion say this: I am not naïve enough to believe that this is a panacea, that this is a quick fix, that once this is passed, all will be well. In conjunction with the positive steps being made in Ottawa, the amendments that have been tabled in our nation's capital, which are a good next step forward in the criminal realm—I think there's more to do, but they represent a good, positive, constructive step forward. Neither of these independently or in conjunction will represent a quick fix.

Organized crime is going to continue to exist in one form or another within this province. But as I said earlier, we have an obligation as parliamentarians, whether it is provincially or federally, to continue to attack what is a blight on our society, to continue to be innovative in the manner in which we go after these corrupt organizations. If this legislation is passed, we will be taking yet another positive, constructive step forward. We will be saying to the individuals who engage in organized crime that while Ontario is open for business, it is not open for the business of organized crime.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):** I'd like to join the Attorney General in making the opening comments with respect to the debate on Bill 30, which is An Act to provide civil remedies for organized crime and other unlawful activities, which basically provides for civil remedies for illicit activities, mainly by organized crime but it could go beyond that.

This bill died on the order paper during the last session. Then Attorney General Flaherty introduced it and we did have some hearings. We had I believe two days of hearings back in February of this year before the standing committee on justice and social policy, specifically on February 20 and February 22, at which the all-party committee heard delegations from a number of sources.

They weren't all in favour of it. There were a number who were concerned with constitutional issues, and the attorney has dealt with that. But on the whole, in my impression, at least—and you can read the Hansards. They're only in two packages; it's very brief. Members who weren't on that committee can read the Hansards, because it's very clear as to what was said. But I believe that on the whole, the delegations that came before the committee supported the legislation.

There was some concern with respect to privacy, and the attorney has read a letter from the privacy commissioner, Dr Cavoukian, which expresses her concerns. She said, "I am satisfied that these concerns have now been addressed."

"The key elements of the proposal include the creation of a new reviewing authority," the slang term of which is the "gatekeeper," "which would be added to subsection 19(4) to determine whether any information obtained during the seizure of unlawfully obtained property should be passed on to the Ministry of the Attorney General." I'm reading from her letter. "The amended section 19(4) would require the reviewing authority to be satisfied that the criteria governing such disclosures, to be prescribed by regulations, had not been met prior to any personal information being passed to the Attorney General."

I don't propose to get into the complications of section 19, other than to say that we have a privacy commissioner. There were some concerns. Those concerns I believe have been met and have been put into the new bill, as introduced by Attorney General Young.

I am pleased to speak today about the remedies for organized crime. The intent of this bill is to use civil law to disrupt and disable corrupt organizations by taking away their illicit profits and to help the victims. One of

the delegations that came forward was the chief of police of Toronto, Chief Fantino. I'd like to read a little statement that he made, which I believe sums up what this bill is all about. He said it in his opening remarks: "It is a well-established fact that organized crime is profit motivated and that if you take the profit out of organized crime—or crime generally, but in the context of this discussion organized crime—you have in effect cut the head off of the dragon and the body, hopefully, will then die."

That's the intent: organized crime gathers these immense amounts of monies, and we believe that through civil remedies those assets can be used, given to victims. The amount of money that's seized for credit card fraud—we had some bank people come to the hearings and give testimony as to the vast amounts of money that are seized through the banks, and just general illegal activity through organized crime.

Chief Fantino went on to say, "Granted, we can dwell on what the bill can't do. I would like more to dwell on the things that it can do. Everything that the bill can do is a tremendous help to us. It lifts our spirits and it helps us focus on the issues that are very critical to us, which is to make a powerful statement with legislation that hopefully will attain the desired results: to absolutely make profitable illegal activities a non-profit activity. So taking the profit out of crime, as this bill endeavours to do, is very important."

That, in a nutshell, is what we're trying to do: to take the profit out of crime so that it doesn't pay to do all these things. First and foremost it is aimed at the profits of organized crime, and it has the potential of addressing that. As I said earlier, taking the profit out of organized crime is essential to the war on organized crime.

1620

My friends in the opposition have said that there's not enough money being put into all of this. Chief Fantino did deal with that: "Bill 155 is structured so that the profits from unlawful activity are seized through the use of the civil rather than the criminal process. It is not a criminal trial process; it is a civil asset process. The use of civil lawyers and associated professionals in carrying out the provisions of the bill, with a minimum of police involvement, will free up scarce police resources to do other, much more needed work in the trenches for our people." I think that's an important fact to say, that police will be freed up to do other things in criminal activity.

One of the lawyers for the Attorney General who has carriage of this in advising the Attorney General came and spoke to the committee and went through the bill, and that too is in the February 20 transcript, if someone wanted to review it. It basically outlines what the bill is doing. This isn't a new invention. Although it's a new process in Canada, it is not a new process in other countries. As the Attorney General has indicated, it has been used in the United States, Ireland and South Africa. It is from those areas that these ideas have developed. He has expressed it very well, and I'd like to quote what he told the committee, which is at page J-703 of the Feb-

ruary 20 Hansard of the standing committee on justice and social policy.

It's "the first of its kind in Canada.... We started with the United States, primarily because it has the longest history in this area. They've been active with this area since 1789 and there's a long, long line of cases in the United States Supreme Court and at all of the circuit court levels to learn from. I believe there are at least 140 federal US statutes that deal with civil asset forfeiture. To my knowledge, virtually every state has a civil asset forfeiture provision of one kind or another, although, to be honest, we focused in detail on New York and New Jersey, simply because they provided a nice comparative base for us to study."

Indeed, two legal people from New Jersey and New York did come to the committee and expressed what was going on in those states. Their comments are available in the transcript, if members wish to look at that as well.

Mr Simser continued, "We not only went through their laws, but we met with their officials to talk about where they had problems and where they had successes.... We took great interest in looking at Australia, which has been active in this area since 1990, particularly New South Wales; the republic of Ireland, which has been active in this area since 1996; the republic of South Africa, which has been active in this area since 1998; and then there was the United Kingdom." He pointed out, "They have not actually enacted laws that are similar to those that are in Bill 155, but in June 2000 Prime Minister Blair endorsed as a question of policy this approach." It appears that they are going to continue on with that legislation. Of course they're in the process of an election, I gather, which is going to happen soon. But I don't think there has been any legislation introduced in the United Kingdom.

The only other item in the transcripts which I'd like to refer to, perhaps to encourage members to look at the Hansards—

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is there a quorum present?

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you check to see if there's a quorum present.

**Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey.

**Mr Tilson:** I'm just going to make one further quote from the Hansards of the standing committee on justice and social policy, and that was by Vaughn Collins, who's the Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Provincial Commanders, Investigations/Organized Crime unit. He spoke to us on February 21 of this year.

He said a couple of things. "Over the past 15 years there has been a dramatic increase in the number of established criminal organizations in Canada. Their primary goal is the acquisition of wealth and the pursuit of

power. Organized crime activities affect the lives of all Canadians, socially and economically. The average citizen would probably identify the crimes of drug trafficking and the illegal gaming as associated with organized crime groups. Today, organized crime groups are involved in a wide range of criminal activities which include money laundering, prostitution, illegal immigration, alcohol, tobacco and weapons smuggling, securities fraud, credit card fraud, document fraud, and telemarketing, to name a few."

There's no question that all of these things are under the jurisdiction of the federal government—the Criminal Code, the charges, at least. This particular legislation, of course, has no penalties, and I'm not going to get into constitutional arguments other than to repeat what has been said. I'm sure the opposition will come forward with some lawyers who say the opposite, but we believe that when you proceed through civil remedies, as has been done in other jurisdictions, it is quite constitutional.

But the point of Deputy Commissioner Collins was, we have a serious problem in this province and indeed across the country. The Attorney General believes—and I would hope that we all do—that we should do whatever we can through the provincial jurisdiction to deal with these issues.

One final quote. He says, "The focus of the proposed legislation is that it relates to any illegally obtained assets by any person. This sends a strong message that states, 'Crime doesn't pay,' for anyone who engages in unlawful activity. Bill 155 will arm the police with an additional option to remove profits from criminals where a criminal proceeding potentially has or may fail."

1630

Those are the only items where I'm going to refer to the standing committee on justice and social policy. But there were certainly a fair number of comments made by those who supported the bill and by those who didn't, although in my estimation overwhelmingly the majority of people who came to the committee supported the bill.

Commissioner Gwen Boniface of the Ontario Provincial Police, in speaking at the Ontario government summit on new approaches to fighting organized crime last summer, stated, "Organized crime is diverse and ever-changing. There is a greater sense of concern about current organized crime activities due to the sophistication of operations, the violence and the diversity and the collaborative nature of many of the operations." We in this province clearly have a problem as far as organized crime is concerned.

I believe, as does the Attorney General, and I would hope that all members of the House will agree, that within our provincial powers there is something we can do. This is one of the tools that I think we can give to the police to deal specifically with organized crime in this province.

Commissioner Boniface added, "Not only are organized crime groups tolerating each other, they are building the networks required for efficient business operations. This evolutionary nature presents new challenges for law

enforcement as we are continually forced to play catch-up."

So life is changing. It is changing very rapidly in everything, in this place here, but certainly in the issue of organized crime. I believe it is incumbent upon the provincial government to take action to deal with it.

It is a global phenomenon, the whole nature of organized crime. It is happening. As indicated, other jurisdictions are dealing with it in the same way we are dealing with it: Australia, South Africa, Ireland and almost all jurisdictions in the United States.

These authorities in other jurisdictions have noted that different groups and individuals will come together to collaborate in a scam—it has become international; we have to communicate with other jurisdictions—and then they'll go their separate ways, after making their illicit profits. They understand the inner workings of global finance. They understand the inner workings of the financial world. They've got the financial expertise to hide their money and make it harder for law enforcement to track down the profits and return them to the victims. That's something we have to always remember: the victims. We have to remember the losses that victims sustain through crime.

A British report found that most crime is committed for profit. The illicit profits are a powerful incentive for people to engage in a wide range of unlawful activities. As a result, organized crime is a real threat to our way of life.

Organized crime has certainly been going on for a long time, in all parts of the world. It is certainly here. We've heard terrible stories that have been going on, particularly in Quebec and in this province. I believe we should do whatever we can to deal with it. It costs the Canadian economy between \$5 billion and \$9 billion a year. It is involved in securities, telemarketing fraud, counterfeiting, credit card fraud, insurance fraud and the other activities I mentioned that I believe one of the police people mentioned at the committee.

The value of the illicit drug market in Canada is between \$7 billion and \$10 billion a year. Illicit drugs—I think the Liberal critic has something going about it in a resolution that he has introduced about drugs. He may speak about that. But the value of the illicit drug market in Canada is between \$7 billion and \$10 billion a year. Illicit drugs are readily available in our communities and reduce our quality of life. There is no question it's a serious, serious problem: all kinds of drugs, from the date rape things that my friend the member for St Paul's has introduced in a resolution—and I'll let him publicize his own work—to the other serious things in our society in Ontario.

It's unbelievable how our credit card information—I'm sure we've all met someone. It's happened to me personally where someone somehow has gotten my number and is charging things to the credit card. It appears that it can be legally copied and it can be used to create counterfeit cards. It costs Canadians \$127 million a year.

Organized crime is in car theft. Many stolen vehicles are sent overseas and sold to other markets. According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, this activity costs the insurance industry \$600 million a year. It costs each of us an average of \$48 added to our insurance premiums. A lot of us will say, "Oh well, who cares? The insurance will pick up the tab on this. It's not going to affect us." But it does affect us, because guess what? Your premiums go up.

We have to continue doing this. These scams, these criminal activities, are on the increase and we have a great obligation, as does the federal government to deal with it within their jurisdiction.

Fraud has a very high cost. Telemarketing scams alone cost Canadians \$4 billion a year. And the personal misery that fraud imposes on individuals and families can be incalculable. We all have stories of how members of our families, our friends and even ourselves have been ripped off by bad people. We believe this legislation will deal with that as well. It's not going to be the end-all solution, but it's a solution. It's a tool for the police to help them deal with it.

There's been a fair bit of consultation that's gone on by attorneys general in other jurisdictions. I have indicated what Mr Simser said at the committee hearings about the United States, Ireland, Australia and South Africa, which use civil laws to seize the proceeds of unlawful activities. That's what we're trying to do on this side. We're trying to disrupt the organizations behind the activities by taking away their profit motive. That's what we're trying to do.

By focusing on the proceeds and assets, we'd remove the proceeds of unlawful activity. More important, we'd compensate victims. They're the long-forgotten people we have to continue to remember. We would starve corrupt organizations of the capital needed for financing other unlawful activities. That's what they do. They gather these vast amounts of money from illegal activities and then they use it in other activities. So any way that we can throw them off I believe is going to help. In other words, Chief Fantino is correct. We can deter the corrupt organizations from victimizing more people.

Ontario has consulted authorities in several other jurisdictions about using this approach. Mr Simser has outlined that to us in the committee, as I am here. There was an organized crime summit which took place last summer. International experts came from all over and told the audience about some of their successes in applying civil forfeiture loss.

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An example was Detective Superintendent Felix McKenna of the Irish Criminal Assets Bureau. He said that some people have simply left Ireland, rather than risk losing the money that they've made from unlawful activities. I hope they haven't come over here. My point is that the Irish law, which is similar to ours, is having an effect.

South Africa has also had its successes. It introduced civil forfeiture in 1998 and it seized more than

C\$14 million. Certain people who were openly involved in unlawful activities and flaunting their wealth have had their assets removed by the South African authorities. In a short period of time, South Africa's civil remedies legislation has sent a strong signal to all citizens that the country would not tolerate those who are engaging in unlawful activity. So it's working in other jurisdictions. This legislation that we're hopeful will pass here in this place is working in other jurisdictions, as we have been told by the people we've consulted with.

The threat to the people of Ontario is real. The people involved in organized crime are not going to stand still. It's our duty as government and our duty to the people of Ontario not to stand still either. I hope that we all support this legislation.

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** I'm pleased today to urge this House to pass the Remedies for Organized Crime and Other Unlawful Activities Act, Bill 30. If passed, this bill will do four very helpful and progressive things. It would let courts freeze, assess and potentially declare forfeit the proceeds of unlawful activity. As well, items intended for future unlawful use would be subject to forfeiture. It would allow civil action against two or more people who conspire to engage in activities that harm the public. Most important, it would enable victims of unlawful activities that lead to forfeiture to claim compensation from those forfeited proceeds.

This legislation which is proposed would focus on property—the proceeds and the assets—and not the individuals. The civil actions under this legislation would be entirely different from criminal prosecutions. I think this is a common sense approach to make illegal activities unprofitable. It means that the strike force will not waste time on unsuccessful criminals. The better a living these criminals are making from their acts, the sooner they will come into the light and come to the attention of the strike force.

When the police answer 911 calls, they go both to the false alarms and ones that are a waste of time as often as they actually go to fight crime. Bill 30 is different: it will add a new worry to the criminal mind. The criminal will have to think. Even if he is not detected breaking the laws and even if he gets away with not paying taxes, even if the other members of his gang don't rob him or kill him or turn him in, and even if he is not killed in a gang fight, the criminal has to worry that he won't be able to keep the loot, even after getting away with the crime.

I have no sympathy for crooks and I'm sure many of the members on this side of the House feel the same way. Society should go after them where they live, where they work, to make this a better place for all of us who live, work and raise our families. Meanwhile, Ontario will continue to vigorously investigate and prosecute organized crime figures in criminal court.

Across the province are many police teams that are pursuing criminal seizure of assets through the federal laws. It's tough work and I certainly salute them. I would

like to take this opportunity to recognize some of the front-line fighters on the criminal justice side of the war against organized crime. RCMP Staff Sergeant Pat McAdam and Constable Kevin Burke are working hard every day in Newmarket to ensure that crime never pays. On behalf of the people of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, my riding, and I'm sure every member of this House, I wish to express my admiration and appreciation for their tireless efforts.

I also want to recognize the hard work of Staff Sergeant Manny Rodrigues and his team at the Peel Regional Police fraud bureau. There is no lack of targets for our proceeds-of-crime officers. Across Canada, police forces like the OPP, RCMP and my own Peel Regional Police are always tracking down the culprits of things like: \$4 billion worth of telemarketing fraud; \$1 billion to \$2.5 billion in estimated insurance fraud; \$650 million in cellular phone fraud; \$600 million in auto theft and scams such as that; and \$127 million in credit card fraud. Of course, these numbers don't take into account the untold billions in profits criminals make through prostitution, smuggling and the trade in narcotics and drugs.

The greater Toronto area combined forces special enforcement unit clearly outlines the facts:

The illicit drug market in Canada is worth between \$7 billion and \$10 billion per year. Drug users engage in \$4.5 billion worth of income-generating crimes in order to support the drug habit.

The demand for the drug ecstasy in Ontario now exceeds five million hits a year. Ecstasy has been used by 4.8% of Ontario students from grade 7 to 13.

The incidents of HIV infections among intravenous drug users is on the rise. For example, in Vancouver the rate of HIV infections has risen from 25% of intravenous drug users in 1995 to 50% in 1997.

Economic crime like securities and telemarketing fraud costs Canadians at least \$5 billion a year, and it is estimated that between \$7 billion and \$17 billion in funds are laundered through Canada each year.

According to the Canadian Bankers Association, the losses to credit card fraud in 1999 were \$162 million. This was an 85% increase over the \$88-million loss in 1996.

In currency, the counterfeit notes passed were close to \$3 million.

Canadian insurers spend in excess of \$600 million dollars annually on vehicle theft. Those losses are passed on to the Canadian public in the form of increased insurance premiums.

Smuggling illegal immigrants into Canada accounts for 8,000 to 16,000 illegal immigrants each year.

The Canadian government loses \$1.4 billion a year to alcohol, tobacco and jewellery smuggling.

Counterfeit products may cost Canadians over \$1 billion a year.

Some 90% of Canadians endorse the view that government should spend more money on the fight against organized crime. In this struggle our banks are aiding our police, and I would like to recognize the contribution that

the banks and the Canadian Bankers Association have made to fighting money laundering from all these illicit activities.

Our government recognizes that Ontario would be breaking new ground in Canada if this civil legislation were passed. Somewhat similar measures have been introduced in a number of countries, including the United States, Australia, Ireland and South Africa. We are forging ahead, learning from the experiments conducted in other jurisdictions. In each of these countries the authorities have successfully used civil laws to seize the proceeds of unlawful activities and hit the corrupt organizations behind these activities where it really hurts and that is in their wallets. These measures have successfully disrupted the organizations and protected people from further victimization.

#### 1650

Our legislation would achieve the same objectives while balancing those objectives with protecting individual rights and privacy. For example, if this legislation is passed, no action could be taken without authorization from a court. Each step, from the initial freezing and seizing of assets to forfeiture, would require the province to successfully argue its case in court. As long as there has been common law, property disputes have been adjudicated with the balance of probabilities standard. If passed, this legislation would be a firm legal foundation.

As another safeguard, the burden of proof would rest on the province, not the defendant. There would be no reverse onus. There would also be no presumption of guilt. The province would have to prove its case.

The court would also protect the interests of people who legitimately own property or a share of property that has an unlawful origin. This provision protects people who may not have known about the origins of the property or couldn't reasonably have suspected that the property was the proceeds of unlawful activity. They would not lose the value of their investment.

Personal information would also be protected. Our approach has the support of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Our government worked with her to develop legislation that would strike the proper balance. If this bill is passed, investigators would have access to the information they need while protecting the privacy of individuals.

What we're talking about is a common sense approach, and I think it is just common sense that courts should be able to inquire into whether large bank accounts come from legal sources or not. This is an infringement of nobody's rights. This is no less democratic than a RIDE checkpoint, and I'm sure we're all united in our support for that worthy program.

Under this proposed legislation, an independent gatekeeper or reviewing authority would screen all personal information. If the information meets the criteria that would govern disclosures, it would be passed on to the Attorney General.

Personal health information, such as medical files, would only be disclosed through court proceedings. The

province would have to prove in court that the health information was necessary and relevant to the case.

As I said, civil asset forfeiture legislation has been used successfully in a number of countries. In the course of our research we looked at what works and what doesn't work in other countries. No one jurisdiction has the perfect solution for Ontario, because each jurisdiction has its own unique problems arising from unlawful activities, as well as its own constitutional and legal environment. We looked at what others have done as we developed a made-in-Ontario approach.

There has been some criticism of the US RICO—that means racketeer-influenced corrupt organization—laws, which allow broad seizure powers for American police. RICO lets American police treat criminals as formal organizations, and if they could document how the organization worked, they would shut down the entire organization at once rather than as individuals, in much the same way that a contract is binding on an entire corporation, not just the employee who signed it. RICO was a trailblazing law. It was a bold experiment in fighting crime, and we know it was effective in the only way that really matters: criminals were afraid of it.

I am satisfied that the Attorney General has truly heard and understood any valid portions of potential criticism in crafting Ontario's law, and I commend the Attorney General, the Honourable David Young, as well as the former Attorney General, the Honourable Jim Flaherty, and the dedicated staff in the Attorney General's ministry. Our made-in-Ontario law will incorporate many lessons learned from all over the globe.

Canada is thought by organized crime experts to be a hub of organized fraud and money laundering. We know there are a lot of lawyers who get very rich every year defending bikers, drug traffickers, fraud artists and other highly lucrative criminal clients.

The Mike Harris government likes to support our industries, but I'm afraid these lawyers who make such a comfortable living defending criminals and earning stolen money may soon have to go into other work because I hope to see a lot more criminals, and fewer rich ones.

I hope the Liberal opposition might join the government in supporting the Attorney General's bill.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** I appreciated the comments of the member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey and the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, and especially the member from Wellington who talked about the state of our data or personal information that you worry about, what you have on your credit card, all this e-data that they have. Where does it go and what they do with it? I think that's something that has to be dealt with, because it is very much out of our control, it seems.

I just want to make sure people listening don't get the idea the province of Ontario, Canada, is a crime haven. We know there is a criminal element here, as there is in

every country in the world, but we have one of the most law-abiding provinces. Our citizens are generally very law-abiding, as you know, almost to a fault. We're too law-abiding. We are very cautious as Canadians and as Ontarians. So I hope people out there watching don't get that impression.

As much as we kick lawyers around in terms of them making a living defending so-called criminals, I would admonish the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale for saying these lawyers now will have nowhere else to make a living. There's a history and a tradition here in Canada that everybody has the right to a fair trial. Many lawyers take that obligation very seriously and do their best to basically represent their clients. I think his blanket statement depicting lawyers as people making a living off of crime, to that effect, is uncalled for. He should clarify that because it is, I'm sure, not what he meant to say.

We have to be appreciative of the fact that Ontario is a safe and law-abiding province, but we do have to make some changes to make it better for us all.

**Mr Kormos:** Don't worry. When the member for Bramalea gets picked up at 3 in the morning for Lord knows what, the first thing he'll want to do is call a lawyer. He'll want the best one he can possibly afford under the circumstances. That's human nature.

What I should tell you is, I'm not going to get to speak to this today. I've only got an hour. The House is going to hit 6 o'clock. I suspect it all depends. The Liberal opposition critic may not use up all of his hour, in which case I'll be able to sneak in. I'll be back here Monday, I suspect around 3:30, a quarter to 4, for an hour, because folks down where I come from were awfully excited when my office let them know we were debating a bill to fight organized crime.

First, they thought we were going to abolish the Senate. I had to convince them that this isn't within the jurisdiction, although that would be the most fitting target if you're really going to go after organized crime. The senators of all ilk and stripes, lazy, overfed, overpaid, soon to be joined by their brethren and sisters in the federal Parliament who, if the news reports are accurate, are going to—this Parliament just got elected and they're going to give themselves what we're told is going to be a mega-maxi pay raise. They may model it after the Harris proposal of 42%, but some of these women and men are already—first, most of them do far less work than their provincial counterparts. I say that without hesitation. They do far less work. They are far more insulated from their electorate. Some won't help an elector if that elector perhaps didn't vote for him or her in the last election.

So Monday at a quarter to 4 I'll be back and I will be speaking to this bill with some interesting twists and turns.

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** I am pleased to join in this discussion as proposed by the Attorney General, the member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey and the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. I guess it's too bad they've got the

largest riding names, because it takes so much time to address them.

**1700**

However, having said that, it is important that each of those honourable speakers spoke to the aim of this legislation, and the aim of this legislation, quite clearly, is to take the profit out of organized crime and other unlawful activities—as simple as that. The bill, if it is passed, would give Ontario the ability to use 21st-century tactics against what we now know is a 21st-century plague. It would enhance the province's efforts to keep our community safe and to help victims. I think that's a very noble objective and certainly something I have been hearing from my constituents in the great riding of Scarborough Centre. Specifically, this proposed legislation will allow civil courts to seize, freeze and forfeit to the crown the proceeds of unlawful activity. It will allow the civil courts to seize, freeze and grant remedies, such as injunctions, against unlawful conspiracies of two or more people. More importantly, it will assist the victims of unlawful activities.

I believe, in consultation with my community, and I believe for all of our constituents in this great province of ours, that is what the people have been saying and that is what the people want.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** One who may be following this debate could probably ask themselves, “Gee, did I hear this before somewhere?” They probably did, because we had this whole debate last time. This is nothing more than another excuse for a public relations stunt by this government.

If they were serious, they had a chance last term. They brought it in, they had public hearings on it, they had second reading on it, but it wasn't important enough to bring it back before the end of the session, before they gave themselves a four-month vacation. It wasn't important enough to bring it back; they let it die. Why? Because all they're trying to do is milk this as a public relations exercise.

They don't care about the real problems of crime, and we've seen that again and again. All they care about is to try to continue to find ways of looking like they're being proactive. I say to you, Mr Speaker, and to the members of the government across the floor, why didn't you do this last time? You had the bill in front of us. Why did you back away? Why did you let it die? You have a majority in this House. You control what goes on around here. You could have had this bill through six months ago or three months ago and you failed to do so.

You talk about getting tough on crime. This same government thinks it's OK for a 14-year-old kid to have a hunting gun. This same government spent millions of dollars fighting the gun registry. They don't believe that people who own guns should have to register so the police know where those guns are. These are the tough-on-crime guys? Oh, they're real tough on crime. They're real tough on picking on welfare recipients, but let their tax-evading corporate friends get away with it. That's

OK, because that's not real crime, according to the Tories.

This bill today is nothing more than simply another exercise in Tory public relations stunts, because if you were serious, you would have done this last time. You had the bill here; you had the majority. There was no excuse, unless you didn't have the political will to do it or felt you could just milk this for more public relations instead of looking after the real problems of crime and trying to go after the criminals in this province.

**The Speaker: Response?**

**Mr Tilson:** I'd like to thank the various members for commenting on the three speeches by the government members. The member for Eglinton-Lawrence I think is quite right. I certainly did not, nor did anyone else on this side, intend to leave the impression that Ontario is a crime haven; it is not a crime haven. But clearly for this jurisdiction, like other jurisdictions around the world, around the country, it is a grave concern. We believe this legislation will assist in some way in dealing with that.

I'd like to thank the member for Niagara Centre for his contribution. The member for Scarborough Centre commented and talked about taking the profit out of crime. Yes, that was said repeatedly to us in the hearings. We believe it is using 21st-century tactics to deal with organized crime and how people from all walks of life are getting ripped off by activities from criminals. The member for Hamilton East—I believe there was just first reading given to the bill. I don't think it ever reached second reading in the last House, so this is the first time it's been debated in the House. The hearings were used as a form of consultation. I think all members of this House have found that having hearings after first reading is an effort to encourage consultation. It gives an opportunity for more debate and reviewing the issue and the concerns. With due respect to him, this is the first time this bill has been debated in this House.

**The Speaker: Further debate?**

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** I am pleased to rise today to speak to this bill on behalf of the official opposition. Let's be clear: Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals will support legislation that will assist working families, more livable communities and a more responsible province, responsibilities fulfilled by the state, responsibilities fulfilled by individuals within our community. That means we want to support initiatives and legislation that provide law enforcement officials with effective and legal tools to crack down on organized crime.

Our concern with this bill is that it is neither effective, nor will it stand the test of time for the reasons I want to speak to. In that sense it is my great concern that this bill is yet another paper tiger, born in another session, the subject of numerous reannouncements, the subject of press conferences, and past legislation that died on the order paper, the source of election promises not fulfilled now for six years.

The Harris government talks about the great problems we're having in this province with respect to organized

crime, and I want to speak to that in a second, but let's be clear: they've been the government of Ontario since 1995. They have had six years to do something about organized crime, and instead we have a situation today where Ontario's economy is losing billions of dollars each year to organized crime.

It has already been said that organized crime is the crime of the 21st century. It knows no borders. It often is without identity in terms of tracking down the Ontario bosses, but at the same time it is affecting all Ontarians and is certainly killing our economy.

The Criminal Intelligence Service Canada director, Richard Philippe, said that over a 24-hour period in this country about \$6 million worth of heroin will be imported into Canada, 21 to 43 illegal aliens will arrive, \$14 million will be obtained through telefraud and 500 vehicles will be stolen.

In my riding, St Paul's, we have a community of law-abiding citizens. We have a community that enjoys many neighbourhoods in which people feel safe. But when you look out the window and you feel safe, as you're looking out the phone may ring, and in particular the seniors in the riding of St Paul's—and we have in the riding a large number of seniors—find themselves suddenly victims of organized crime: credit card fraud or fraud through the telephone.

Vehicles stolen—no riding is immune to that, certainly not a riding in the city of Toronto. It's an issue that affects people even in a neighbourhood in those areas where they feel incredibly safe. The threat of organized crime is there.

#### 1710

What is the province of Ontario, the Harris government, purporting to do about it? The problem is that the government has introduced legislation which theoretically will, I guess, drive the Ministry of the Attorney General over to the civil courts in order to seize assets and enforce forfeiture of property. But at the same time, there are already provisions in Canada's Criminal Code, which I want to speak to in a moment, which permit for the seizure of assets and for forfeiture. Here's the conundrum, and I want to return to this: unless the government is going to double or triple or quadruple their enforcement, unless they add more prosecutors, significantly more, unless they bring in an army of forensic accountants, unless they provide the appropriate resources to the civil courts, in particular the superior courts, this bill will be nothing but a paper tiger.

Will the government of Ontario be using fewer resources to enforce the Criminal Code provisions for assets and forfeiture? As we'll hear in a moment, a representative of the Ministry of the Attorney General said, "No, we won't do that. In fact, we're going to beef it up. We're going to beef up enforcement of the Criminal Code provisions on organized crime asset and forfeiture." As we'll see in a second, that isn't reflected in the budget. But at the same time, they're going to use this new tool, as it's often referred to in the media and here in the Legislature during debate. If you're going to

do that, then you need to make the investment, and that investment would have been evidenced in the budget. As it turns out, incredible as it may seem, a government that talks so much about crime and safety and victims is actually spending less in the Ministry of the Attorney General, after you factor in inflation, and considerably less when you factor in the new arbitration award in terms of salaries for prosecutors, than they did last year. So in fact they're making not more of a contribution to cracking down on organized crime but even less of a contribution. That makes this bill nothing more than a PR stunt.

Moreover, by legislating in an area of criminal law there is a significant risk, and a representative from the Advocates' Society who came and spoke to the committee said it is not just a risk but maybe a probability, that in fact this legislation will be struck down. So not only do we have all the announcements and all the press conferences, all the time and resources expended by the ministry to promote and move this bill forward through six years and several ministers and several announcements and reannouncements, not only do we have the bill introduced and call in witnesses from across the province, in fact from across North America to come and speak to a bill, which then dies on the order paper, not only do we then reintroduce it, go through debate and committee hearings again and divert significant, I suppose, enforcement assets one way or another, in one direction or another, toward enforcement of the Criminal Code provisions, as opposed to or maybe instead of or maybe in addition to—I don't know—enforcement of these new civil provisions; after all that, the bill may end up literally being an illegal, unconstitutional bill. In that sense, this will have been an enormous waste of time and an enormous waste of money, and at the end of the day the people of Ontario will hardly have been served by this public relations stunt.

This becomes even more concerning to me when you consider that the province of Ontario already uses the Criminal Code provisions, the existing Criminal Code tools, less proportionally than other provinces. We heard that from Professor Margaret Beare of Osgoode Hall Law School. She said, and I'm quoting here, "Ontario is the province that tends to use" the existing Criminal Code provision for powers of seizure "less than some of the other provinces."

The government isn't even using the provisions which they purport to be improving upon with this new provincial bill, so they wouldn't even know if those particular remedies were defective or ineffective. They're not even using them. But if they're not even using them, on the one hand, why should we be led to believe that in fact there's going to be an actual enforcement of this law in the event that this bill passes?

The point being that we have a law on the books. It can't be said enough. We have a law on the books. It is Criminal Code powers. There are a number of federal powers that exist and federal initiatives that have been launched. We, of course, can do the same within our own

jurisdiction, and ought to do. When I say "we," I mean the province of Ontario, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. But at the same time as introducing effective and legal initiatives, we need to do our job and administer justice, enforce the laws. That's what the province of Ontario does with the Criminal Code. Yes, there's the RCMP, and yes, there is, as I said, CSIS enforcement provisions and tools within the province of Ontario, but very importantly, we have police and prosecutors within the jurisdiction of the Attorney General of Ontario who ought to be enforcing the law. We heard, from the person who heads up the organized crime branch at Osgoode Hall Law School, that in fact they're not doing it now. With even less money provided to this ministry in the budget, we're of course going to see less enforcement.

The reannouncements have been legion. Let's start with the fact that the previous incarnation of this bill, which I believe was Bill 155, was first announced in a Toronto newspaper in May 2000. So we got that announcement. Back in 1996, the Solicitor General had also made an announcement about proceeds-of-crime legislation. In addition to that, there were promises in the 1995 election and in the 1999 election from the government to introduce this legislation. Just keep in mind, it's now 2001. Then, Attorney General Flaherty attended four summits on organized crime: in Vancouver, in New Jersey, in Delaware and in Washington, DC. After attending those four summits—this is, remember, after the announcement and the promises, after the announcement of the proceeds of crime legislation—the Attorney General came back and hosted his own summit in Toronto. Many of the people he met at these summits now came to Toronto. So we had the Attorney General visiting other jurisdictions—several, I should add—and then inviting them back here. Of course there was a glossy brochure and press conferences and speeches. It was quite a show.

Then finally, in the fall of 2000, the bill gets introduced, the proceeds-of-crime legislation. Then we go through the charade of pretending we were going to pass it, we have committee hearings, and then the bill dies on the order paper. It's then reintroduced. This promise, this reannouncement, has got a pretty long history.

**1720**

When I talk about existing federal laws on organized crime and on the seizure of proceeds of crime, I'm talking about the 1997 Criminal Code amendments which were specifically addressed to criminal organizations and organized crime through An Act to amend the Criminal Code (criminal organizations) and to amend other Acts in consequence, 1997. The amendments introduced in Parliament included new seizure powers and a scheme for the forfeiture of what was called "offence-related property"—in other words, proceeds of crime and property in relation to crime—and also for the forfeiture on conviction of a criminal organization offence. The code specified the kinds of offences that ought to be targeted for assets and forfeiture. That's the hard business of legislating in a way that keeps in line with the

jurisdiction of the federal government and also ensures, as is the policy of the federal crown—and I know of the provincial crown as well; supposed to be—that in fact we are not wasting the taxpayers' time in debating and passing laws that are going to end up being struck down by the charter.

I'm not saying that should always tie our hands, but certainly the due diligence has to be exercised by governments and by the ministry to ensure that in fact it is charter-proof in that way and that it is also BNA Act-proof in that way. Otherwise, it is an enormous waste of time and resources. Obviously the taxpayers find it hard to have any confidence in the exercise of tough crime fighting talk when the laws end up not getting passed and end up getting struck down.

Provision 487 deals with the seizure of property. It governs the issuance of search warrants. It was amended to provide that there be reasonable grounds to believe that there is a building, receptacle or place—sorry—when there is any offence-related property, a search warrant may be issued. The forfeiture provisions are 490.1 to 490.9 and they detail a scheme for forfeiture of property used in the commission of an offence—in other words, offence-related property—and are generally similar to the provisions in the code dealing with forfeiture of the proceeds of crime.

There is, in other words, through the federal Criminal Code, a means by which the provincial prosecutors and the police in the province of Ontario may seize assets and ensure that the proceeds of crime are collected. We have to, at the very least, invest the time and resources to try and make this existing law work before a province gives up on that law, number one. Number two, although we may want to change federal laws, in this House, in this assembly, we can't. We have a federal Parliament democratically elected to do that. We have to operate within our own jurisdiction and certainly fulfill our responsibility and mandate to enforce existing laws on organized crime.

The federal government has also reintroduced anti-laundering legislation; money laundering, obviously. There are other initiatives, including the integrated proceeds-of-crime units that were established in 1997. In April 1997 the anti-gang measures were introduced into the Criminal Code. The cornerstone of that legislation being—and this was and remains controversial—any participation in a criminal organization becomes an indictable offence punishable up to 14 years in prison.

Again, we have laws on the books. We ought to be enforcing those laws. Waving around a piece of paper saying that there are new tools is not going to have any positive impact on reducing organized crime unless the laws are actually enforced. It becomes difficult to make an argument that the province of Ontario, through its jurisdiction, by investing in a provincial civil asset forfeiture scheme is going to be able to effect the kind of change that requires national and international co-operation.

We've heard again and again, quite rightly, from experts in this area, and we've also heard from members of the government and witnesses before the committee that organized crime is the truly global crime.

The problem with a provincial property approach to organized crime is that the bad guys, their property, the assets and the proceeds of crime are likely not in the province of Ontario. The victims are, yes, but the assets and the proceeds are not. Arthur Pittman, in an article called Money Laundering: A Challenge for Canadian Law Enforcement, written in 1998 in the Criminal Law Quarterly, says that 80% of all money laundering cases have a foreign component. In other words, money moves across the borders to jurisdictions with opaque banking secrecy laws.

This bill will not get at that money. This bill will not be able to get at those assets. This bill will not be able to seize the proceeds of crime for those criminals. OK, fine. Does the bill then provide the means to create net worth profiles of suspects? In other words, is the bill going to permit us to find out who the bad guys are so that we have a profile of the suspects and where their property is? This bill doesn't do that.

Does it provide for an army of forensic accountants? Is there any commitment for that in the budget or otherwise, because that's the only way to get to the bottom of these crimes? It doesn't. Does the bill beef up transaction reporting by financial institutions? It doesn't do that either. Does it automatically track ownership of real estate, for example, and expensive cars involved in organized crime? No, it doesn't do that either. Does it guarantee that police forces will share information with one another and make the long-term commitment to intelligence work that is needed intra-province, among all the provinces and with other jurisdictions outside of Canada? It doesn't do that either. For that reason, I'm very concerned it is nothing but a paper tiger.

We heard from a representative of the Advocates' Society during the committee hearings. There a concern raised about whether or not there was overlap with federal provisions, which would mean it would end up being struck down because both laws are trying to do the same thing and one may conflict with another. If the federal government is said to have jurisdiction, as of course it does in crime, and this is seen as interfering with that and is incompatible with it, then it would be struck down.

Not only that, but he saw the potential for operational conflict. In other words, you've got an instance of organized crime. You've got a case. What part of the Ministry of the Attorney General do you go to? I asked the lawyer representing the Ministry of the Attorney General this question. To be fair, I may have asked the member for Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey during committee hearings, but I'm sure I asked the representative of the Ministry of the Attorney General, what branch of the Attorney General is going to deal with it? Is it going to be the civil side or the criminal side? Of course they are

different divisions within the Ministry of the Attorney General. There are different assistant deputy ministers.

So who's in charge of the investigation? Is it the ADM criminal or the ADM civil? Is there going to be a priority within the Ministry of the Attorney General? Is there going to be a policy whereby in the instance of organized crime they're going to use their bill, in other words, the provincial bill, and not the federal bill, or are they going to use both? If so, which court are they going to go to because we're obviously talking about two different courts. For the Criminal Code provision, they're going to go to the provincial court. For the civil remedy through this bill, the Harris government's approach, they'd go to the Ontario Superior Court.

Which direction are they going to go? What's the policy? Are they giving up on the Criminal Code, or as the Ministry of the Attorney General said during the hearings, are they going to beef up—these were his words—enforcement of the federal code provisions?

We need answers to that question, and more than that, it would seem, based on the comments of the representative from the Advocates' Society, that in fact there may be an irreconcilable conflict, or maybe it's fair to say that it would have made a lot more sense to make the investments of time and money, political capital, and also taxpayer resources, into enforcing the laws already on the books.

### 1730

There were concerns raised about civil liberties, in particular by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, and quite rightly so. I'll talk about those in a moment.

Obviously, there is great concern among members of the public that in fact they are going to find themselves having their property seized under this new test for seizing property and assets which does not require a finding beyond a reasonable doubt that a crime has taken place, does not require enforcement of the usual federal Criminal Code provisions, but rather applies the easier standard to meet, that on a balance of probabilities a judge must find that an unlawful act took place.

That unlawful act, by the way, is any unlawful act. There's no specified unlawful acts that might target this or focus this upon organized crime. It would make sense that in fact we focus this bill to deal with organized crime. And fine, it takes more legislative work to define what those unlawful acts are, but it means that, for instance, you can't find yourself having assets seized or your property seized because you violated the beekeepers act. If you violate the beekeepers act, under this particular legislation it means you might have your assets seized. I don't think that violations of the beekeepers act have anything to do with organized crime in the province of Ontario. Maybe the government can explain to me otherwise.

But we're supposed to, I guess, trust the Harris government with the civil liberties at stake. We're supposed to trust the Harris government with the privacy interests of Ontarians. I have to say that, regardless of what my opinion is on this matter, there has to be a

serious lack of confidence in this government's ability to protect privacy interests, considering the way in which this bill was handled.

You may remember back in the fall when the bill was introduced, there was a J. Edgar Hoover clause which permitted the Ministry of the Attorney General to collect health information without any protections. We, the official opposition, stood in this House and called upon the Minister of Health and called upon the Attorney General to take the J. Edgar Hoover clause out of the bill. Before I get any further, let me say that Attorney General Young took the J. Edgar Hoover clause out of this bill, and for that I credit him.

On the other hand, we heard from the Attorney General of Ontario and we heard from the Minister of Health, again and again, "No, no, official opposition, don't worry. You're wrong. Trust us. We know what we're talking about. We'll protect the privacy interests of Ontarians. No need to worry. You're just reading the bill wrong."

Here we go: Hansard, 12 December 2000. Dalton McGuinty asked the Attorney General about this particular J. Edgar Hoover clause that would permit the Attorney General to collect health information. "No, no," said the Attorney General. "By virtue of those sections, personal health information is excluded from section 19 of Bill 155. So that personal health information is not available to the Attorney General or any other minister, pursuant to section 19 of Bill 155."

Mr McGuinty, the leader of the official opposition, wasn't satisfied. He said, "No, here's my reading of the bill, and it's pretty clear that there are no such protections."

Mr Flaherty said no, "The accusations and the interpretation made by the member opposite are inaccurate." He would live to regret and retract that comment.

We kept at it. Lyn McLeod, the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan, 13 December 2000: "So today I will ask you, what protections are you prepared to put into your bill to make sure that the Attorney General has no legal right to get private health records on suspicion alone?" The Minister of Health was outraged. How dare you question our understanding of legislation? She said, "This is unbelievable, and I'm going to refer it to the Attorney General to answer."

The Attorney General said, well, I've already told you in this House "I think three times now," and he offered a briefing to everybody, as if the opinion of the Attorney General was definitive. Let me say that this Attorney General, and every Attorney General past, at least in the last 50-odd years, is the most frequent litigant before the courts of Ontario. He or she is not infallible.

**Mr Kormos:** What's his track record? Let's talk about his track record.

**Mr Bryant:** I'll talk about the track record, in particular when it comes to jurisdiction on gun control and other matters.

**Mr Kormos:** He's not doing so well on Montfort, either. There's some pretty tough questions from that panel.

**Mr Bryant:** I thank the NDP critic, but he's going to get on, I'm sure. I'm going to keep him in suspense here.

The Attorney General provides his opinion. He advocates before the courts of Ontario and sometimes the Supreme Court of Canada. But it is hardly definitive. This is just an advocate. So having his opinion is not going to necessarily satisfy the official opposition. We respect it, we consider it, but we certainly can disagree with it. The briefing was hardly dispositive of the issue.

Mrs McLeod said, "There's no protection here at all." Mr Flaherty said no, "It's quite clear from ... Bill 159 what personal health information is protected. If the member doesn't understand that," if the member "is confused about it," he said, "or any other members of her caucus are confused about it, I welcome them to come and meet with the legislative drafters, with counsel informed on the issue" and he would "explain it to them." Don't worry, said the minister of the crown, we've got it under control.

Then, lo and behold, in the new year, with a new minister, on February 20, 2001, the Attorney General announced that he was taking out the J. Edgar Hoover clause and putting in the privacy protections that were needed. I congratulate Attorney General Young for that, but I have to say it is difficult for us to take the ministry's word for it at face value that all the civil liberties protections are provided, because this government's record—this says nothing about the excellent crown counsel who work, at the Ministry of the Attorney General, who are the best at what they do—when it comes to privacy issues and when it comes to the issues just spoken of, is not one that inspires confidence.

We heard from a number of witnesses before the justice committee on the bill. One of the important submissions made was from the Office for Victims of Crime, always an excellent submission, always helpful, always looking out and fighting for victims of crime. Here was the submission. "While this bill," the organized crime bill, the office said, "is not in place to correct existing victim services difficulties" in Ontario, "it's worth pointing out," the office said, "that the victims' justice fund, under the Victims' Bill of Rights, 1995, has a large, unutilized surplus, while large parts of the province are without crucial victims' services."

This is the Office for Victims of Crime speaking. "As no regulations have been circulated for this bill," nor have any yet in the new reincarnation of the bill without the J. Edgar Hoover clause, "we do not know," said the Office for Victims of Crime, "the methods that will be used under the bill to compensate victims of crime. We know that it is the intention of the bill to do so, but we don't know how. The office welcomes the involvement of an arm's-length, independent body being involved," noting at the same time that the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board is already overburdened.

That has not been addressed: the concern that we are just moving yet again, and I say this again, that we are transferring a focus away from the Criminal Code enforcement, away from provincial courts, off to the Superior Court with no corresponding and reciprocal support of resources and personnel. At the same time, we are now also shifting a new burden on to the already overburdened Criminal Injuries Compensation Board to try and compensate victims. It is like providing a new tool, however ineffective or effective it may be, and locking it up in the box because we have no people who can pick up the tool and use it.

1740

Why is it important to devote resources? Because cracking down on organized crime is expensive work. Don't take my word for it. We heard from a representative at the hearings, Roddy Allan, the principal at Kroll Lindquist Avey, a forensic accounting firm, February 20, who said, "It has to be kept in mind that linking property with unlawful activity can be a difficult and costly task, one which police are not going to take on unless they are given the resources. Organized crime makes use of sophisticated expertise. Police will need training and access to costly outside experts. Victim compensation and supportive police are two obvious applications of seized assets."

We don't have the investment made by the government to use the tools they are trying to create. In fact, the Ministry of the Attorney General is cutting the amount it is investing. At least, that's self-evident from the budget.

We also heard from a representative of the OPP. We heard from Vaughn Collins, deputy commissioner, investigations/organized crime, Ontario Provincial Police. "The cost to the OPP of dealing with organized crime," we heard, "and in particular of enforcing this new statute, will have to be met," the submission was made.

We also heard from Chief Julian Fantino, Toronto Police Services. He made it very clear that fighting organized crime is expensive. It involves sustained, long-term investigation, travel, technology and labour-intensive work.

You've got to show the people the money if you're going to deliver upon new tools. I would submit to this House, and I would say to the people of Ontario, the resources, the investments aren't there. I fear this is a charade, that this is a paper tiger—"Here, look, we're doing something on organized crime"—when in fact the investments are not made to follow through and enforce the laws.

Another place that provided some criticism of the bill was not a source you would think would be critical of this government. But on December 2, 2000, came the editorial from the National Post. "No political promise sells better than the age-old pledge to get tough on crime. Small wonder, then," writes the Post, "that Ontario's provincial government, which is drifting along with little sense of direction at the moment, has announced plans to implement new US-style laws that would permit officials to seize the property of criminal gangs."

"Like too many Ontario law and order initiatives these days," says the National Post, "this one appears to have been cooked up quickly with the goal of grabbing headlines. The party of the Common Sense Revolution can do better than this," says the National Post.

The concern about there being all talk and no action on organized crime was not really solved after I heard from the excellent spokesperson from the Ministry of the Attorney General, Jeffrey Simser. I asked him whether or not the bill addresses the issue of resources in and of itself. In other words, is there a commitment made, as I put it, "to an army of forensic accountants being brought in"? Mr Simser said, "No," it's not. So I asked, "Well, what are you going to do? Are you going to enforce the Criminal Code provisions or are you going to withdraw your criminal division and install more civil lawyers to enforce your proceeds-of-crime legislation?" The ministry lawyer said, "My understanding is in fact they're beefing up their process rather than knocking it down." That was his understanding, and I'm sure that's exactly what he thought.

I have a hard time squaring that with what we heard in the budget. There are cuts in services provided by the Ministry of the Attorney General. The 2001-02 budget commitment is \$979 million; 2000-01, \$971 million. That's a 0.8% increase, but inflation is expected to be somewhere around 2.8%. That means just on the face of it there's a cut in services and spending, but add to that the fact that all crown counsel have received an approximately 30% increase in salary, and that has not yet been accounted for in the 2000-01 budget. So either they are spending less on victims, either they are going to have fewer crown counsel, or they are going to have certainly fewer resources devoted to cracking down on organized crime. The budget would suggest that there is not going to be any beefing up in terms of the enforcement of the laws. On the contrary, there are going to have to be cuts.

I also asked the ministry representative whether there is anything in the bill that deals with transaction reporting by financial institutions. "No," he answered. "OK," I said, "with respect to the sharing of information between police forces?" and we talked about how important it was that there be sharing, it being a national and international issue. "Does the bill address that information-sharing component?" "No," the ministry lawyer said, "the bill does not address that."

We heard from a number of witnesses, as has been alluded to, including Mr Alan Borovoy, a familiar witness before the justice committee, speaking as the general counsel of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. He was there with his associate counsel, Stephen McCammon. Mr Borovoy said that one of his chief concerns was how over-broad the particular statute was. "The definition of 'unlawful activity,'" he argued, for purposes of seizing people's property, "should be confined to the most serious offences," that not every minor transgression should be able to lead the state to go after that person's property.

He gave an example. Mr Borovoy said, "I gave the specific example for those purposes of the merchant who sells some goods in violation of Sunday closing laws and I asked the question, 'Do you really want to be able to seize whatever that person sold?'" So you violate a Sunday closing law. Do you really want to seize the property that person sold? Under this bill you can.

I know that the counter-argument often is that the good prosecutors of Ontario will exercise their discretion. "But we heard that with respect to the Safe Streets Act and how charities," we said, "were going to be adversely affected and shut down. Their charitable fundraising activities that would take place in the streets of small urban and rural communities in Ontario would be shut down." "No worries," I remember the government members saying. "Discretion will be exercised."

Well, look what happened. In fact, in many cases there is no way. There are no two laws; there's just one law. Nobody is above the law. As it turned out, of course, charities are losing about \$1 million each year because of the Safe Streets Act. So we can't just trust the prosecutors and the police to exercise discretion; it's our job to get the laws right.

**1750**

"Yes, it's unlawful," said Mr Borovoy, if for example a Sunday closing law was violated. "Yes, a person would face a fine for that illegality. But how much more do you want to be able to do to him for something that really isn't all that serious?" I would say—those are Mr Borovoy's words—that has nothing to do with organized crime.

Think about how far this goes. A judge makes a finding on a balance of probabilities. The example of a balance of probabilities versus reasonable doubt, the most obvious example, at least in the last 10 years, is the difference between what happened to O.J. Simpson in criminal court and what happened to him in civil court. Balance of probabilities, an easier standard to satisfy, versus reasonable doubt. That's the difference. So a judge looks at, "On a balance of probabilities, has an unlawful activity taken place?" Yes. There we go; the act is triggered. Any unlawful activity? The violation of a Sunday closing law? Yes. The violation of a beekeepers act? Yes. The violation of a Young Offenders Act? Yes. Any violation of any law is going to trigger the ability of a judge to order seizure of property.

The failure to narrow this law and tailor it to the crimes that we know are involved in organized crime is a glaring failure in this bill, but it's wrapped up in this so-called fight this government claims to be undertaking on organized crime. I say to you, Mr Speaker, with all due respect, it is a fight in word only and not in deed.

Supposedly, with the introduction of this law, all the mobsters in Ontario were going to run away. As it turned out, after the bill was introduced we had, it seemed, at least in terms of media reports, a flood of biker gangs heading into the province of Ontario. They were hardly shaking in their boots.

Commenting on the law, Yves Lavigne, who has been called the "foremost civilian expert on the Hells Angels" by the Ottawa Citizen, said of the law—he was asked on TVO, "What is the likely effect of this legislation on biker gangs?" Mr Lavigne said one word: "None." None. This will have no effect.

The bottom line becomes the bottom line when it comes to cracking down on organized crime. We, the official opposition, have proposed a plan to crack down. What it requires is a provincial organized crime agency, a permanent and separate agency, with the sole responsibility of battling white-collar crime, proceeds of crime and organized crime, staffed with securities experts, lawyers, police and forensic accountants, organized crime prosecutors. Again, we don't know how the Attorney General is going to organize itself in terms of cracking down on organized crime. Are they going to abandon the Criminal Code provisions or are they going to beef up both? You can't do both. The organizational conflict is inherent.

The so-called commitment to victims I have to say is a farce. In fact, this government in its throne speech had one point on victims. I think it was 19 out of 24. I can't remember how many priorities there were, because there really were none, there were so many. The announcement came, and I was thinking this will be good. Maybe finally the Attorney General is going to establish a provincial victims service standard, as recommended by the Office for Victims of Crime. But they didn't do that in their announcement. I thought, maybe finally they're going to join the fight against date rape drugs and support the resolution from Ontario Liberals to give every man and woman the right to be tested for date rape drugs.

You'd think that this is pretty straightforward. You can go to a doctor, go to the hospital, get a blood test. You can find out what your cholesterol count is, you can find out so many things about what's in your blood, but not whether or not a date rape drug was slipped into your drink the night before. That is not something that the people of Ontario have a right to do. They have to go to the police first, the problem there being that according to the Ontario women's legal directorate, only about 6% of victims of sexual assault in fact do turn to the police. That means the province is abandoning the vast majority of victims of date rape.

So, too, do we need a provincial victim service standard so that every victim in this province receives the same kind of service, no matter where they live. In *A Voice for Victims*, the report of the Office for Victims of Crime, 71 recommendations were made. The very first one called on the government to establish a provincial victim service standard applicable to all victims of crime. The recommendation was not implemented.

It turns out that victim assistance now accounts for less than 3% of the operating budget of the Attorney General, according to the public accounts of Ontario, 1999-2000. In its report on victim services in Ontario, the office found that 59% of victims were not being notified about bail hearings in their case; 66% of victims had no

input in plea negotiations; 49% of victims were not advised of the probation or parole conditions imposed on the perpetrator; 53% of victims received no assistance in preparing a victim impact statement. None of that was addressed in their much-anticipated throne speech announcement.

Maybe they'll get a real Victims' Bill of Rights, I thought, like they have in the provinces of Alberta, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Manitoba and British Columbia, with enforceable obligations, not statements of policy, which is what the Ontario Victims' Bill of Rights represents.

Then I thought maybe in fact they're going to make up for the fact that they killed all those bills when the House

was prorogued, and maybe the government of the day is going to finally proclaim those bills that have not yet been proclaimed, for reasons which I still don't understand. In the past session, the Attorney General introduced 11 pieces of legislation. Six of the 11 were justice-related. Of these, do you know how many are currently in force? Two, and that—

**The Speaker:** As you know, it being 6 o'clock, the member will be able to continue when the order on the bill is called again.

It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Monday, May 28.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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No. 19A

Nº 19A

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**

Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 28 May 2001**

**Lundi 28 mai 2001**



**Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr**

**Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr**

**Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers**

**Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 28 May 2001

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### WEARING OF RIBBONS

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wish to ask the House for unanimous consent to wear a yellow ribbon, with the support of the community of Wawa, asking that Henrietta be returned safely home.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

I thank the member.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** Humewood is a public elementary school located in the western part of St Paul's that is going through the hell that is public education under Mike Harris. The school is losing three and a half teaching positions next year: three full-time and one part-time. That's more than one in seven of the school's teachers. The ESL program is being reduced from one full-time teacher to 50% of a teacher, in a school where 21% of the students do not have English as their first language. The library is reduced from one librarian always on duty to the library being open only 70% of the time. The vice-principal is reduced from full-time to half-time. Grade 2 is reduced from three teachers to two and a half; there will be three classes of 20 in the morning and two classes of 30 in the afternoon. It's all because of the government's broken funding formula.

One mother of a first-grader and a fourth-grader wrote to me, "I cannot foresee that the children of the city of Toronto will be able to compete on a global level.... I do not understand why the Ontario government is spending so much money on testing our children, when the funding is not available to help the children who are not meeting the government standards.... What is being done to our schools and therefore our children is a disgrace. Give us our schools back."

Another mom wrote, "My twin daughters will be in grade 4 classes with 29 children in them. The grade 2s, which my son is in, will have three classes of 20 in the morning and then" will "be reorganized into two classes of 30! in the afternoon."

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 28 mai 2001

This makes no sense. That's why Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals have a better alternative for working families and public education: a real cap of 20 students in the primary grades; scrapping the broken funding formula; lighthouse schools that innovate and permit schools to succeed; and curriculum flexibility, emphasizing the basics but giving schools the opportunity to innovate.

I say, on behalf of the parents of Humewood school and on behalf of parents across the riding of St Paul's, it's time for the Harris government to wake up and check out the McGuinty plan. For those of you in Ontario who have it: [www.OntarioLiberal.com](http://www.OntarioLiberal.com). Follow the links to "Education."

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** For the member for Durham, the clock isn't working, so the member didn't have any time. The clock isn't working for your members. I would beg a little bit of indulgence. The table will remind me, and I'm sure all the members won't—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** He got the "www" in on time.

For all members, the countdown clock isn't working but the table will still watch the clock to make sure it doesn't go extra-long. I appreciate the indulgence of the House.

### VOLUNTEERS

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** This evening in Cobourg there will be a celebration in recognition of 141 volunteers for their valuable work throughout the community. Volunteers are being honoured during the International Year of Volunteers. They will be presented with the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards for their hard work and dedication over the many years.

It is with an event like this that the Ontario government has the opportunity to thank and recognize the province's volunteers. Youth volunteers are being recognized for two or more years of continuous service, and adults are being recognized for five, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and new this year is 50-plus years of continuous service.

In Cobourg tonight there will be two local residents honoured for 50-plus years of community service. They are Mary Cappler, figure skating club, Port Hope, and also Ruth O'Neill, with the corporation of the Town of Port Hope and Hope.

This is an opportunity to express our appreciation for the long-term commitment that these individuals have

given to their community. As their work is being recognized this evening, they also act as role models for other individuals to become volunteers or continue to volunteer in their community.

Ontario's International Year of Volunteers theme this year is "Everyone Counts." This is very true in Northumberland, as ordinary people are making extraordinary differences through their efforts in their community.

#### UNIFIED FAMILY COURT

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):** I rise in the House to speak about the most needy and vulnerable members of society: the children. In particular, I wish to bring to the attention of the House and to the Attorney General in particular a situation of growing urgency in the Hamilton-Wentworth area.

For over 30 years, Hamilton has had a Unified Family Court addressing the needs of children and families in struggles for custody and, most importantly, to protect the rights of the child. However, increasingly there is statistical evidence to show that something is not functioning correctly in the system. There's gridlock. Children are falling through the cracks and being forced to exist in limbo for extended periods of time as their cases drag on for months and sometimes years.

In 1998-99, there were 1,609 motions heard in the five unified court jurisdictions pertaining to the Child and Family Services Act, 1,360 of them in the Hamilton-Wentworth court. Hamilton has the lowest caseload on a per capita basis, yet ranks worst in the number of motions resulting from those cases, often by a factor of 10.

This trend is replicated in the number of court-ordered supervised visits. While Toronto has over 5,000 children under their care, they facilitated 46,000 trips; Hamilton has 1,200 children in care and facilitated 42,000 trips.

Of greatest concern in the Hamilton area is the length of the temporary care situation. By constantly remanding cases, filing dozens of motions, requiring multiple appearances in these cases, children are forced to live in limbo, often in foster situations while their parents continue to have access to them. Research has shown that this has a detrimental effect on growth and development, particularly emotional development.

I believe that the situation in Hamilton is untenable. I believe the system is in a state of dysfunction. I call upon the Attorney General to order an independent review and conduct a needs analysis to explain the anomaly of the Unified Family Court in Hamilton-Wentworth.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Members' statements.

#### ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** I'd first like to introduce a student who is shadowing me today from Port Perry High School. David Jehu is a grade 10 student who is joining me.

Mr Speaker, through the Ontario Trillium Foundation, our government has consistently shown that it supports many community-based projects throughout the province. Today I want to recognize some of the projects in my riding of Durham that will be receiving funds from this agency of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

The Clarington Concert Band will receive a grant of \$55,000 for the second annual Great Canadian Town Band Festival, running from June 15th through the 17th in Orono village. Organizers of this three-day music festival, which attracts bands from across Ontario and the US, include Dave and Judy Climerhage, Janet Cingle and Barry Hodgins. They and many others are working hard to ensure that the musical traditions of small-town Ontario are kept alive and well.

Receiving Trillium grants of \$300,000 over four years is the Scugog Shores Millennium Project in Port Perry. This is an innovative plan for shoreline restoration that will see the creation of an ecology park stretching three quarters of a kilometre along the shores of Lake Scugog and will include a walking trail. I recently had the pleasure of taking part in project chairman Reverend Sandy Beaton's commissioning of this important event.

The Port Perry Legion, Branch 419, will also have a \$50,000 grant for making their facility more accessible to those in need.

I also want to congratulate Cartwright Sports and Recreation and the Clarington Tigercats football club for their successful applications. Clearly, this is a case where the government is working for the community.

1340

#### WAWA MASCOT

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** The township of Michipicoten wants Henrietta home. People are wearing yellow ribbons awaiting Henrietta's return. Businesses are displaying yellow moose-crossing signs in their windows.

Some time ago, government agents arrived at Young's General Store. They politely but unceremoniously spirited Henrietta off to lock-up. She has been held without bond and incommunicado since the seizure.

Anita Young, the store's proprietor, Reeve Doug Woods and the whole community of Wawa want Henrietta back. I ask the Legislature, do we want those thousands of tourists and children who have had their photographs taken with Henrietta to come to the realization that they may have been consorting with an underworld mooster?

Henrietta is not just a stuffed moose. Henrietta is an icon that has attracted thousands of people to the beautiful town of Wawa. People come to town to visit the many fine restaurants, hotels, outfitters and other businesses and attractions, but they also come to see and be seen with the charismatic Henrietta.

I have asked the Minister of Natural Resources to return Henrietta to my custody. I will see that she is

returned home. I personally guarantee any necessary court appearances, and I guarantee that I will take every step necessary to ensure that her testimony will not be influenced.

Minister Snobelen, I ask you to free Henrietta. Free our moose.

### BEAR CONTROL

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I really do hope that moose gets free some time.

I want to say to the minister responsible for natural resources across the way, Minister Snobelen, that what we told you would happen two or three years ago is happening. The government cancelled the spring bear hunt. They said this was a good thing for all kinds of reasons. We in northern Ontario said you have to have some sort of controls in order to control the population, otherwise we will be inundated by bears, especially in smaller communities.

We now have stories across northeastern Ontario, in my region of the province, where we have bears coming into the community. In fact, the town of Chapleau is being inundated by bears as they go into the community in record numbers than seen before.

Just recently I was up in Moosonee—I think it was on Saturday—and they've got bears running out on the runway. I've got to tell you, it's pretty hard to land my plane when I've got to be ditching around bears that are running down runway 08.

I say to the minister across the way that what really bothers me is that when we contact the Ministry of Natural Resources and say, "What are you going to do about it?" they say the ministry has lost the responsibility to do anything about this because they have been cut back so badly that they don't have the staff to go out and do anything about getting the bears out of the communities. So they say it's passed on to the provincial police. You call the OPP and the only response they've got is, "Other than shooting them down, we've got no money."

I just say to the government across the way, this whole policy doesn't work, and before somebody gets hurt, we ask you to do something positive in this regard.

### HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** This year, Habitat for Humanity of Waterloo region will build a brand new home in New Hamburg in my riding of Waterloo-Wellington.

I want to congratulate the Abarca family, who can look forward to earning the better living conditions for which they dream as they work with Habitat for Humanity to build a home of their own.

Pat McLean, Woolwich township councillor and executive director of Habitat for Humanity in Waterloo region, has advised me that Habitat for Humanity's goal is the elimination of poverty housing.

They are doing this for people with strong coordination, public support, work by volunteers, what they call "sweat equity" and homeowner training by the prospective home-owning families.

These homeowners learn home maintenance, how to be good neighbours and how to budget and pay the mortgage, and this formula has been a tremendous success.

Since 1988, Habitat for Humanity has developed 34 homes with families in Waterloo region. Three are being built this year, and five are projected for next year.

The home to be built in Waterloo-Wellington this year is a first for New Hamburg, with special thanks to Doug Wagner, a Ross Dixon financial services adviser, for sponsoring and helping Habitat for Humanity make this dream of a home a reality for the Abarca family.

Last month, my family and I had an opportunity to offer our support and to meet many of the supporters of this project at the Habitat for Humanity fish fry in New Hamburg.

Their compassion and understanding of the pride and importance of home ownership for families is inspiring to all of us, and I encourage everyone to help Habitat for Humanity give a hand up to people in our communities across this great province.

### ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** I spent this past Saturday morning in a wheelchair touring my community to get a sense of the obstacles that face citizens in wheelchairs. It was a profound event for me when I realized that what seems like a minor barrier is in fact major to those in chairs.

This is National Access Awareness Week. The Premier promised in writing in 1995 to pass an Ontarians with Disabilities Act during his first term in office. To this date, not only has that act not been put in place, but the Premier has refused to meet with any citizens from that committee. He has refused their requests 27 times. Five times he indicated he was too busy, four times he referred them to someone else and 18 times he ignored their requests to meet with them.

This is not acceptable. Ontarians with disabilities have a voice. This week, I will be tabling a resolution that requires the Premier to meet with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee. They are full citizens and are entitled to nothing less than a meeting with him. We know only what we experience or what we are told and learn from others. To ignore this request from citizens is an absolutely unbelievable and unforgivable situation.

I call upon all members of this House to support my resolution, which will require the Premier to meet and dialogue with, learn about and serve Ontarians with disabilities.

## ROY EDWARDS

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I'm very pleased to rise this afternoon to pay tribute to a constituent of mine who recently was honoured by the Simcoe County District School Board for 45 years of dedicated service to the youth of Simcoe county as a school trustee.

Roy Edwards, a very proud husband, father and grandfather, served Simcoe county schools and communities with dedication and enthusiasm as an elected school board trustee from 1949 to 1994. Throughout his 45-year tenure, Trustee Edwards maintained a strong commitment to Simcoe county's public education system as it evolved from one-room schools to a county-wide network of urban and rural community schools. Mr Edwards chaired the Simcoe County Board of Education from 1979 to 1981.

A long-time resident and farmer in the Medonte area, Roy Edwards earned the trust and support of students, staff, parents and community members by carefully considering local education issues with his respected blend of reason, common sense, fairness, warmth and friendly sense of humour. In June 1995 the Ontario Public School Boards Association presented Roy with the Dr Harry Paikin Award of Merit in recognition of his dedicated service.

I congratulate the Simcoe County District School Board, under the leadership of director Sharon Bate and chairperson Mary Anne Wilson, for naming their boardroom at Midhurst the Roy Edwards Meeting Room on May 9 this year. On behalf of the citizens of Simcoe county, I want to thank Roy for his commitment to education.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### VICTIM EMPOWERMENT ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR L'HABILITATION DES VICTIMES

Mr Sampson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 60, An Act to give victims a greater role at parole hearings, to hold offenders accountable for their actions, to provide for inmate grooming standards, and to make other amendments to the Ministry of Correctional Services Act / Projet de loi 60, Loi visant à accroître le rôle des victimes aux audiences de libération conditionnelle et à responsabiliser les délinquants à l'égard de leurs actes, prévoyant des normes relatives à la toilette des détenus et apportant d'autres modifications à la Loi sur le ministère des Services correctionnels.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the minister have a short statement?

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services):** Yes, thank you, Speaker. The title of the bill

actually speaks quite directly to the content. We believe that victims should have a greater role in the criminal justice system, so the bill would propose that they have more role to play in parole hearings. The bill establishes a framework for the implementation of some minimum and basic grooming standards in jails in Ontario, and it also requires that internal disciplinary hearings proceed when an inmate is accused or alleged to have assaulted a correctional officer, regardless of whether criminal charges are laid.

1350

### FIREARMS SECURE LOCKING DEVICES ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR LES DISPOSITIFS DE VERROUILLAGE SÉCURITAIRE D'ARMES À FEU

Mr Bryant moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 61, An Act to require secure locking devices for firearms / Projet de loi 61, Loi exigeant des dispositifs de verrouillage sécuritaire pour les armes à feu.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** The bill prohibits the sale of any firearm that does not have a secure locking device incorporated into its design unless the purchaser is provided with or purchases a secure locking device for that firearm at the time of sale.

The bill would also prohibit the sale of any firearm manufactured after the bill comes into force if the firearm does not have a secure locking device incorporated into its design. The bill would not apply to firearms purchased for police use.

The bill would come into force six months after it receives royal assent. Trigger locks save lives, and this is the Firearms Secure Locking Devices Act.

### PHYSICAL FITNESS DAY ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR LA JOURNÉE DE L'APTITUDE PHYSIQUE

Mr O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 62, An Act proclaiming Physical Fitness Day / Projet de loi 62, Loi proclamant la Journée de l'aptitude physique.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** This bill proclaims the first Friday in September in each year as Physical Fitness Day. Medical studies have consistently shown that a moderate amount of physical activity is one of the keys to a long, healthy and productive life. This bill provides for a special day to promote physical activity and its benefits.

Evidence suggests that many people in Ontario live an increasingly sedentary life. This is a dangerous and expensive trend: it endangers our health, lowers our quality of life and costs taxpayers billions of dollars in health care premiums that would not otherwise be necessary.

The principles of the bill also recognize the valuable contribution made by coaches, volunteers, educators, parents and medical professionals in promoting physical fitness. These community leaders serve as role models in encouraging Ontario to include a moderate amount of physical exercise in their daily lives. A healthy body certainly contributes to a healthy mind.

## MOTIONS

### HOUSE Sittings

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Monday, May 28, Tuesday, May 29, and Wednesday, May 30, 2001, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I apologize. The motions were introduced on the order paper separately. You'll have to do them separately, if you would.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** In the attempts of efficiency, we will go back. I move that pursuant to the standing order, the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Tuesday, May 29th.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1355 to 1400.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hastings, John	Snobelen, John
Baird, John R.	Hudak, Tim	Spina, Joseph
Barrett, Toby	Jackson, Cameron	Stewart, R. Gary
Beaubien, Marcel	Johns, Helen	Stockwell, Chris
Clark, Brad	Kells, Morley	Tascona, Joseph N.
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Tilson, David
Cunningham, Dianne	Maves, Bart	Mazzilli, Frank
DeFaria, Carl	Mazzilli, Frank	Miller, Norm
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	Hardeman, Ernie
Ecker, Janet	Munro, Julia	Hastings, John
Elliott, Brenda	Mushinski, Marilyn	Hudak, Tim
Galt, Doug	Newman, Dan	Jackson, Cameron
Gilchrist, Steve	O'Toole, John	Johns, Helen
Gill, Raminder	Runciman, Robert W.	Kells, Morley
Guzzo, Garry J.	Sampson, Rob	Tilson, David

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Dombrowsky, Leona	McGuinty, Dalton
Bartolucci, Rick	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Bisson, Gilles	Gerretsen, John	McMeekin, Ted
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hampton, Howard	Parsons, Ernie
Boyer, Claudette	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Kormos, Peter	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Pupatello, Sandra
Bryant, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramsay, David
Caplan, David	Lankin, Frances	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Levac, David	Sergio, Mario
Curling, Alvin	Marchese, Rosario	Smitherman, George
Di Cocco, Caroline	Martel, Shelley	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 43; the nays are 35.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.  
Motions?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Monday, May 28, 2001, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1404 to 1409.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Runciman, Robert W.
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Sampson, Rob
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Snobelen, John
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Stewart, R. Gary
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Cunningham, Dianne	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	DeFaria, Carl	Tilson, David
Dunlop, Garfield	Dunlop, Garfield	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	Ecker, Janet	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Elliott, Brenda	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Galt, Doug	Galt, Doug	Wilson, Jim
Gilchrist, Steve	Gilchrist, Steve	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gill, Raminder	Gill, Raminder	Wood, Bob
Guzzo, Garry J.	Guzzo, Garry J.	Young, David

**The Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Dombrowsky, Leona	McGuinty, Dalton
Bartolucci, Rick	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Bisson, Gilles	Gerretsen, John	McMeekin, Ted
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hampton, Howard	Parsons, Ernie
Boyer, Claudette	Hoy, Pat	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Kormos, Peter	Peters, Steve
Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Phillips, Gerry
Bryant, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Pupatello, Sandra
Caplan, David	Lankin, Frances	Ramsay, David

Colle, Mike  
Curling, Alvin  
Di Cocco, Caroline

Levac, David  
Marchese, Rosario  
Martel, Shelley

Ruprecht, Tony  
Sergio, Mario  
Smitherman, George

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 45; the nays are 36.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Motions? The government House leader.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** One more time. I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Wednesday, May 30, 2001, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1413 to 1418.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Emie	Runciman, Robert W.
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Sampson, Rob
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Snobelen, John
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Stewart, R. Gary
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	Maves, Bart	Tilson, David
Dunlop, Garfield	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	Miller, Norm	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Munro, Julia	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Galt, Doug	Murdoch, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Gilchrist, Steve	Mushinski, Marilyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gill, Raminder	Newman, Dan	Wood, Bob
Guzzo, Gary J.	O'Toole, John	Young, David

**The Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Dombrowsky, Leona	McGuinty, Dalton
Bartolucci, Rick	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Bisson, Gilles	Gerretsen, John	McMeekin, Ted
Bountriogiani, Marie	Hampton, Howard	Parsons, Emie
Boyer, Claudette	Hoy, Pat	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Kormos, Peter	Peters, Steve
Brown, Michael A.	Kwinter, Monte	Phillips, Gerry
Bryant, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Pupatello, Sandra
Caplan, David	Lankin, Frances	Ramsay, David
Colle, Mike	Levac, David	Ruprecht, Tony
Curling, Alvin	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
Di Cocco, Caroline	Martel, Shelley	Smitherman, George

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 45; the nays are 36.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege under standing order 21, on business arising out of the House.

The budget was tabled in this House on May 9, and the Treasurer has not attended one question period since that day. It is extremely frustrating for the official opposition not to be able to stand up and—

**The Speaker:** Sorry to interrupt the member. He does know that a point of privilege needs to arise out of the business here today. Relating to the attendance of any member, the member will kindly know that I have no authority whatsoever on attendance. I will let him continue if he could get very distinctly to the point he is trying to make arising from the point of privilege.

**Mr Duncan:** The point is that tonight we begin debate on the budget bill, and for nine or 10 sitting days since the budget was tabled, we have not been able to question the Minister of Finance about that. It undermines the very essence of this chamber and what parliamentary democracy is about.

**The Speaker:** Again, the member will know the Speaker has no authority regarding attendance of any member in this House.

**Mr Duncan:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We were informed that the Premier would be in attendance today.

**The Speaker:** Just for any clarification, the government House leader.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** There was never any notification that I'm aware of about his attendance today.

**The Speaker:** I thank the government House leader.

Same point of order?

**Mr Duncan:** Normally we're informed, and it happens quite often that we're informed the Premier will not be here. The Premier's schedule today indicates he is in his office down the hall doing appointments at Queen's Park. We have not been informed that the Premier will not be in the House today.

**The Speaker:** Again, I'm not privy to what whips and government House leaders inform each other of.

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm asking for your assistance and guidance and, ideally, direction with respect to the private education tax policy. In particular, I want to ensure, on behalf of opposition members and the Ontario public, that it garners the attention it deserves according to the principal values of democracy that govern this Legislature.

As a point of reference, when funding was extended to Catholic schools in 1985, there were extensive public hearings across the province. I understand that those hearings took some 80 days, including 68 days of public hearings. Earlier today, I delivered a letter to the government House leader requesting that there be full debate among members of this Legislature, as well as extensive public hearings on the government's newly introduced policy to extend tuition tax credits for private schools.

As leader of the official opposition, I'm asking you now, as Speaker of this assembly, that you ensure that the significant and dramatic departure in our province with respect to education policy receives thorough debate among the members, as well as ample and sufficient public hearings.

**The Speaker:** I've said in the past that the Speaker is governed by the standing orders. I don't have the power and authority to do that.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** We wish you did, though.

**The Speaker:** Some may wish I did, and on occasion I may even wish to have some more power, but unfortunately we're governed by the standing orders and I have no authority regarding the hearings.

**Mr McGuinty:** Mr Speaker, on a separate point of order, then, and in light of your ruling, I would ask for unanimous consent from members of this Legislature to amend Bill 45, the budget bill, by removing those sections of the bill that deal with the extension of tuition tax credits for private schools so that they may be introduced as a separate piece of legislation and thereby become entitled to separate debate and separate, full public hearings.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I heard some noes.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe it is the prerogative of the Speaker, and I believe there is a federal precedent in which the Speaker of the House of Commons exercised his authority to divide a bill if he felt that it could not be given due consideration because of the nature of the omnibus bill.

I would submit to you that this particular amendment that the Leader of the Opposition has requested is in essence a division of the bill. It separates out a section of the bill which does institute a substantive change in long-standing policy. Even if you do not have the authority to order hearings, I believe you do have the authority to divide the bill and allow a portion of the bill to be dealt with separately in the interests of due parliamentary procedure.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: First of all, as the honourable members are well aware, this legislation is budget policy. It's well within the orders.

Secondly, if the honourable member, the leader of the party, wishes to debate this issue, I welcome him to the debate tonight and on subsequent occasions when this legislation is indeed being debated in this chamber.

**Mr McGuinty:** Mr Speaker, if I may, further to my colleague's point of order and for purposes of your consideration: Last week was constituency week. I had the opportunity to visit schools and to meet with a number of constituents. I can tell you—I haven't got an exact tally now—that we have received close to 700 separate letters on this issue. It is a matter of grave concern to the people of Ontario and I believe—

**The Speaker:** I appreciate it. As you know, some bills that have appeared here—Bill 26, for example, was an omnibus bill that was allowed to pass through. This is not even close to some of the other bills that have appeared, so the bill is entirely in order.

The member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan on the same point of order.

**Mrs McLeod:** Mr Speaker, it's actually asking for clarification, because I believe the decision not to separate Bill 26 was made by the Speaker of the day. If my recollection is correct, it was recognized at the same time that he did have the authority to divide the bill but made the decision that it would not be divided.

**The Speaker:** There are some bills that have come up and there has been some discussion on the same point of order. Basically, it's based on the size of the bill, being omnibus. This one is not even close in terms of being out of order and it is in fact very much in order. It's very controversial, I may say, and may be as controversial as some of the other bills, but it is perfectly in order and there is nothing wrong with the bill.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is, as might be expected, for the Minister of Education. During the 1999 election leaders' debate, your Premier looked directly into the camera and said the following: "I've been asked, would I support private schools. I went to the Jewish congress and I told them no, my priority is public education." Your Premier made a very specific campaign promise and I am absolutely certain that many Ontario voters relied on that specific commitment. They were induced by that specific promise to vote for Mike Harris and the Conservative Party.

I think it's time, Madam Minister, to inject at least a little bit of honesty into this debate. Will you be straight now with Ontario families and admit that you have broken your promise to them?

1430

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Before the honourable member starts throwing around accusations, I should refer him to an article in Now magazine that he might want to read.

This is about respecting parental choice, very, very simply. This is also about continuing a commitment to the public education system that this government holds very, very seriously: more money, higher standards, better choice for parents, more information for parents—initiatives which the honourable member continues to oppose.

**Mr McGuinty:** If you won't defend the Premier, then we'll see if you're prepared to defend yourself, Madam Minister. On January 13, 2000, you sent a letter to Minister Axworthy and you said, "Extending funding to religious private schools would result in fragmentation of the education system in Ontario and undermine the goal of universal access to education." On January 19 of the same year, you sent a letter to me and you said, "Complying with the UN's demand ... would remove from our public education system at least \$300 million per year, with some estimates as high as \$700 million."

Can you tell me why it is that a policy that not so long ago was viewed by yourself as something that would fragment and undermine public education, a policy that would cost public education somewhere between \$300 million and \$700 million, has now become your personal cause célèbre? Why is it that suddenly something that was so wrong yesterday is so right for you as Minister of Education today?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** If the honourable member recalls, the reason the Premier and I wrote to him was because we weren't quite clear what he was saying and where he was coming from.

Secondly, my commitment—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Will the minister take her seat. Members, come to order. We're not going to continue if I can't hear. Sorry, Minister of Education, for the interruption.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. We might even correspond with the honourable member again just to make sure we're clear where the Liberals are coming from on this, because it seems to depend on who you're talking about what their position is.

I don't need lectures from the honourable member about my commitment to public education, which is as strong today as it was when I first took this portfolio and for as long as I shall stay in this portfolio.

**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, you can dance over there, you can dance all you want, but you are dancing on your own and you have seriously damaged your own personal credibility.

In your letter to me of January 19, 2000, you implored me, you beseeched me, you begged me not in any way to accede to the request put forward by the UN. Here's something else you said at the time: "Quite obviously, such an action would run directly counter to Ontario's long-standing commitment to public education."

I'm asking you on behalf of working families which relied on the Premier's specific promise during the course of the election and your specific commitment made not that long ago, why is it that you have suddenly changed your mind and have betrayed public education and our families?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I might refer the honourable member to *Now* magazine, which has a wonderful article here: "As usual, the Liberals want to have it both ways." It quotes his education critic as contending that "funding for religious schools doesn't necessarily mean less money for the public system."

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Will the minister take her seat. Order. I'm going to start to pick people out now. Just so you know, we're going to start picking people out and we're going to start throwing them out.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Even the honourable member's own education critic has said publicly that funding religious schools doesn't mean taking money out of the public education system. I happen to agree with the Liberal critic, because this government has increased public

education funding yet again this year, over \$370 million this year of new money, new investment.

We're continuing to move forward with what we promised the voters we would do: higher standards, standards which the honourable member opposes; testing so we know how our students are doing, testing which his critic this weekend was saying, "Who needs testing"—

**The Speaker:** Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up. New question.

*Applause.*

**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, they can clap for you, but you are swinging all on your own on this one. This is about your personal credibility and integrity, and you should have the decency and the honour to castigate this policy, to disown it and to say that it's wrong for public education and wrong for our families.

Ten years ago the leader of your party, Mike Harris, felt so strongly about the need for public hearings on the budget of the day that he tied up this House for three weeks, and let me tell you what he said at the time: "I am fighting and will continue to fight for the right of the public of this province to be heard, to come before the parliamentary committee to pass their comments on this budget...." Your Premier, Mike Harris, said that a public hearing on a budget was a right for Ontario voters.

Will you do today what your Premier said yesterday was the right thing to do? Will you give Ontario families the right to appear before a parliamentary committee and to voice their concerns about your private school voucher policy?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member may want to sit here and cast aspersions about the integrity of people on this side of the House; he can be personal if he wants. I don't think that furthers legitimate public debate in this chamber or in any other place.

This issue is clearly about parental choice, a choice that parents make within the public system, a choice that some parents may wish to make outside the public system in independent schools, and we believe that is a choice that should be respected, that parental choice should be respected.

I know the honourable member, after dithering on both sides of the issue here, is now going to say to those parents, those families in his riding, in Mr Kwinter's riding, in Mr Kennedy's riding, in Mr Caplan's riding and in Mr Bryant's riding, "We don't respect your choice. We don't think you know best for your kids, and we're going to take that away from them."

We respect parental choice; it's time the honourable member did.

**Mr McGuinty:** It is painfully obvious to all who paid any attention to this that one day you said that this was wrong and a terrible thing and now you stand up in this Legislature and tell us that it's a wonderful thing and a wonderful development for public education.

Do you know what you need to do? You need to hold public hearings. Presumably you are proud of this policy; you are quite prepared to defend your policy. Why is it that you won't allow Ontario families to appear before

you or the representatives of the government during public hearings to voice their concerns?

I'll ask you the same question again, Madam Minister: will you hold public hearings so that Ontario families will have an opportunity to voice their concerns about your private school voucher policy?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, the honourable member keeps describing it as a private school voucher, but that's not what it is, and he knows that. So he can try and twist that if he wants.

Secondly, it was Ontario working families who told this government, who came to this government and said, "We want this government to respect parental choice," and that is why we took the decision we did. That is why the budget laid out not only more money for our public education system, money above enrolment growth, new investments in public education, but also laid out a way that we can respect the parents who choose independent schools.

**Mr McGuinty:** Let's review this for the public now. First of all the Premier said he would never do this. After the election you said you would never do this. Now you're doing it. No other jurisdiction in Canada funds private schools in this way. No other province has money for a tax credit so that they're inviting parents to abandon public education, and by the way, no other government has been so determined to kick the stuffing out of public education for six years straight. This is radical, this is a broken promise, but first and foremost, this is wrong.

Madam Minister, if you are so darn proud of this public policy, I ask you once more: why won't you commit to public hearings so that Ontario families and everybody concerned about the future of public education can attend and voice their concerns about your private school voucher program?

1440

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We're not holding public hearings on private school vouchers, because there's no one promoting that.

Secondly, the honourable member can try all he wants to make statements that do not reflect the reality in this country, but there are five other provinces that do fund independent schools. Other countries that the honourable member likes to cite in this House as having great records in public education also have support for independent schools. With all due respect, it is not an unusual thing for a government to do.

Thirdly, we respect and support parental choice within the public system. We're putting in place mechanisms by which parents can have stronger voices in the public system. We also respect parental choice outside, in the independent schools. I don't know why the honourable member doubts the wisdom of parents. I don't know why the honourable member cannot accept that parents may wish to make a choice—

**The Speaker:** Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

New question.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** A question for the Minister of Education. At the same time that your government intends to extend public funding to private schools, you are closing 138 public schools across the province. The school boards are very clear about why it's happening. It's because there's not enough money in the funding formula to allow them to operate their schools, and therefore they have to close. When you close schools like that, it tears the heart out of the community. But what it also means is thousands of young children spending hours on a school bus to get to the next school.

How do you justify closing 138 elementary schools in Ontario at the same time you extend \$300 million of public funding to private schools? How do you justify that?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We have increased funding for school accommodation, for school construction in this province. He may not have noticed it, but we have construction of over 200 new schools, schools in my riding and the ridings of all members here with growing communities with growing families that need new schools. For the first time—under this government, not under his government—we're actually seeing a decrease in the number of portables across this province, a trend I would have thought the honourable member would support, and that is because of the way we assist school boards in funding capital expansion in this province.

**Mr Hampton:** You're telling boards of education to go out and borrow money if they want to build new schools. The same school boards are telling you that part of the process is that they have to close existing schools. Other boards of education across this province are having to close schools. Kids are having to spend hours on school buses to get to the next school. That's the question, Minister: how do you justify closing 138 elementary schools, forcing children to spend hours on school buses to get to the next school at the same time that you say you've got \$300 million a year in public funding to support elite private schools? It doesn't match. You're closing public schools in order to find the money to fund private schools. How do you justify that?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We have more children in the public education system. That's why we're building more schools—"more" being the operative word here. If the honourable member would like to pretend that in communities where there have been shifts in population, where children have grown up and moved out—if he wants school boards to sit there and pay overhead for schools that are less than a third full in some communities, he should say so. What we are doing with school boards is helping support an expansion in those communities that are growing. We are helping to support higher standards in the classroom with our funding. We are helping to support an improvement in capital construction. His government didn't have the courage to do it. We've made that decision. It's a decision that school boards have said is working well for them in terms of meeting the needs of growth communities. That

is the purpose and objective of trying to build new schools where those are needed.

**Mr Hampton:** If you're so convinced that using public money, taxpayers' money, to fund private schools is such a good idea, then you ought to hold public hearings and go out there and talk to those parents who are seeing their children bused an hour and a half to get to the next school.

You ought to come to my community, Minister, where the school that I went to is brimming its overflow. They're using portables, yet they have to close the school and bus the children.

You ought to get out there, Minister, and hold those public hearings. You ought to tell those parents who are seeing their school closed, their community school shut down, their children being bused for an hour and a half, why that's a good idea.

Will you hold public hearings, Minister, so that all those parents who are seeing their public schools closed while you fund private schools can have a say in this and tell you whether they think it's a good idea? Will you hold the public hearings?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member has asked this question before and we have said that the government is making decisions about how consultation should occur on the implementation or the initiatives that are in the budget. You will be one of the first to be informed, sir, when that decision is made.

Let's go back to what's important here. What's important here is, one, that initiative is respecting parental choice. Second, what is also important here is that there is over \$315 million out there for school construction. We have more school construction going on now, some \$3 billion in projects that are going on out there, because of investments we've made in the public education system, because of the commitment to the system, investments that will continue because we agree and we support the public education system.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Hampton:** Again to the Minister of Education, at the same time that you intend to make \$300 million of public money available to private schools, there are thousands of children across this province who need junior kindergarten, who need early childhood education, but they aren't getting it. The boards are clear on why it's not happening: because the money isn't in the funding formula to do it.

Your own study by Fraser Mustard said that this had to be a priority, that if we want children to do better in the education system, we should be funding junior and senior kindergarten.

Minister, how do you justify denying thousands of children across this province the junior kindergarten they need, that Fraser Mustard, in your own report, recommended, while at the same time you can afford public money for private schools?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The budget included \$1,000,200,000 for health care. I don't hear the honourable member

saying that that was taken out of the public education system.

The budget also included more money for GTA transit. I don't hear the honourable member saying that that was being taken out of the public education budget.

There was a 40% increase for children's treatment centres, something that his government didn't manage to do when they were there, a long-overdue decision. I don't hear him saying we took that out of public education, because the truth is quite the contrary: we are putting more money in the public education system, new investments, to help that system.

**Mr Hampton:** It's interesting that the Minister of Education, who's supposed to be the defender of public education, wants to talk about transportation to deflect attention away from what she's doing to the education system.

Your own Education Improvement Commission said that extending full-day junior kindergarten had to be a priority if children were going to succeed. They said that, yet we see that thousands of children across the province continue to be denied access to junior kindergarten and the senior kindergarten that they need, because you don't have the money. Yet at the same time you can be generous to elite private schools, you can give their parents a \$3,500 tax credit.

Minister, how do you justify it? You deny children who need access to JK and SK. You deny them that access, you won't fund it, but you've got lots of money for elite private schools. How do you justify that?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member well knows that we do fund junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten in this province. We do, sir, and there has actually been an expansion in some of those junior kindergarten classes.

Second, we continue to increase investments in the public education system. We continue to move forward with a testing agenda, with a comprehensive teacher-testing program, with safe schools, all important priorities that parents said were needed in the public education system. That commitment, those new investments, that commitment to public education stands, and it's as strong today as it's ever been.

1450

**The Speaker:** New question. Leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** For the Minister of Education. Madam Minister, your private school voucher program represents a dramatic departure from Ontario education policy. It was something that was never promised; in fact, it was something that the Premier specifically said he would not do. Until recently, you yourself, in your letter that you sent to me, specifically said that we should not do this. You said yourself that this would cost the public education system at least \$300 million per year, with some estimates as high as \$700 million per year. Those are your words. Ontario parents are very concerned about the impact this is going to have on the integrity and

viability of public education, where 96% of our children go to school.

I ask you again: why is it that you will not allow those concerned parents to attend before a parliamentary committee through the public hearing process to voice their concerns?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, it was concerned parents who said, "Invest more in the public education system." We did. It was concerned parents who said, "We want to make a choice to go to a school that might better reflect the religious values of my family." We respected that.

The other thing that I think should be very clear is the budget made very clear that our financial commitment to public education stands, that our financial commitment to public education will increase as it should. No one on this side of the House, no one, supports taking money from the public education system to put it anywhere. That's why we are putting more in the public education system.

**The Speaker:** Final supplementary?

**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, what are you afraid of? Why are you ashamed of this policy? Why won't you put it before a parliamentary committee and have it travel the province and give Ontarians the opportunity to comment on your policy? What are you afraid of? Do you know that your government, for a snowmobile safety act, sent this to a travelling public committee that spent five days travelling the province to get feedback from the Ontario public? We're talking here about a dramatic departure for public education.

I ask you once more: why is it that you are afraid of holding public committee hearings that will give the opportunity to Ontarians to voice their very serious concerns about your policy?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The only fear in this chamber is the fear of listening to the honourable member trying to decide which side of this issue he's been on for couple of weeks.

The government is considering decisions about a range of pieces of legislation in terms of how they're going to be discussed. I would welcome the honourable member to come to the debate when this legislation is going to be debated in this House.

It's the views of parents which make a very strong impression on this government. That is why we made the commitments we made to public education. That's why we've made the investments in public education that we've made. That's also why when parents came to us and said they wanted us also to assist, to respect that choice to go to an independent school, for example, a school that might well better reflect their religious values, this government said we were prepared to respect that choice.

The honourable member, again, clearly showed that he thinks he knows better than those parents about what works best for their kids. If he wants the public education system to succeed, then perhaps he might consider supporting—

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up. New question.

## RURAL CRIME

**Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** My question is for the Solicitor General. One thing we know for sure about crime, it's not unique to large cities. Roughly a quarter of Ontario's population resides in rural communities and on farms. Residents in my constituency of Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant are in that 25%, and they're worried. They're worried about rising crime, as are our big-city cousins. For example, car and truck thefts always seem to be high in our area. We've had tractor theft in Haldimand. One farm meeting I attended, virtually every farmer there had either a tractor or farm equipment stolen from farm buildings or from their farmyards.

Minister, what is the status of rural crime in our province?

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** Regrettably, there has been an increase in rural crime over the last few years. Livestock and farming equipment are very valuable, and farmers and their families have much of their livelihood tied up in these items. Rural communities obviously face a unique challenge, and that is that neighbours often live far away. Everyone deserves to feel safe, whether they live in a city or a rural setting, and that's why the OPP have developed a strategy to respond to rural crime.

**Mr Barrett:** Minister, I wish to report that in my riding, the Haldimand-Norfolk OPP have confirmed that break and enters did decrease from 921 incidents in 1999 to 908 in 2000, so it has gotten a little better in recent years. As well, auto thefts fell from 504 to 435 in the same period. Unfortunately, thefts over \$5,000 increased from 39 reports to 57 between 1999 and 2000. Could you tell my constituents and other residents of rural Ontario what our government and the Ministry of the Solicitor General are doing to address rural crime?

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** In 1998 the OPP introduced a special rural crime prevention strategy aimed at reducing the number of break-and-enter crimes.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** Apparently the Liberals think this is funny. Our party takes it seriously. You've done nothing about this, you and your federal cousins.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The Solicitor General, take his seat. Thank you, folks.

The Solicitor General.

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** The Liberals are soft on crime; we know that.

Funds for the initiatives through the front-line policing crime prevention grant have, in a six-month period, reduced break-ins by 8.8% where OPP jurisdiction lies. So we've expanded, and now have dedicated rural and agricultural crime teams. We're funding \$4 million per year, allocated for the next three years.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Education. I want to draw to your attention Bill 12, An Act to increase the safety of equestrian riders, a private member's bill put forward by a colleague of yours in your party. The bill is one page in length, and I wonder if you know that this bill is the only matter of business before the justice and social policy committee and a full day of public hearings has been set aside to consider the matter of equestrian helmets.

It seems to me, in the grand scheme of things, that if your government believes it's important to award one day of public committee hearings for equestrian helmets, surely you can see your way to seeing that we have several weeks made available for public committee hearings for your private school voucher bill.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** First of all, I can give you one guarantee: there's not going to be one day of public hearings on a private school voucher bill proposal, because that's not what's before this Legislature.

Secondly, I think it is important to have hearings on that particular bill, which the honourable member has worked very hard on. Many pieces of legislation that come through this House have hearings, and when the government has made some decisions around the hearings around bills, around the consultation and discussion that have to be done on any number of pieces of legislation that are coming before it, we'll certainly let the honourable member know.

**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, I want you to explain this to the Ontario public now, because I'm sure they're somewhat confused about your priorities over there. When it comes to an equestrian helmet bill, you can set aside one full day of public committee hearings. When it comes to a snowmobile safety bill, you set aside five full days—extended over the course of two weeks—of public committee hearings, which travelled.

Why is it, then, that when we have your new education policy, a matter which is far-reaching, which is unprecedented, which represents a dramatic departure from traditional education policy in Ontario, which was never promised during the course of the campaign—in fact, it was specifically promised by the Premier not to go there and, more recently, you yourself said you weren't going to go there. Why is it, in view of all of that, Madam Minister, that you can't give us even one single day of public committee hearings on your bill?

1500

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** As the honourable member, if he would bother to listen, would know, first of all the Ministry of Education—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Minister, take your seat. Thank you. Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I've already answered the honourable member's question. He doesn't want to listen,

and that's fine, but you know what? The legislation that is being debated in that committee had to do with a child who died. Now, he may not think that's important, but the members on this side do believe that that particular debate is important. When the government has decided about the range of discussions and consultation that may be needed on budget bills, on other legislation that is before this House, we will certainly be announcing that. But for him to continue to try to make allegations in this House I think is grossly unfair to all of the members in this Legislature.

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I think it's important at this point to make it very clear that the bill, Bill 12, which is indeed valuable legislation, has all—

*Interjections.*

**Mrs McLeod:** Mr Speaker, if I may. That bill—  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Next one this side yells, they're out.

I hear points of order, point of privilege; I've told you a lot of times, I need to hear them. You can heckle the other politicians. I need to hear points of order and points of privilege. Next one on the government benches that does it is out.

Member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan, sorry for the interruption.

**Mrs McLeod:** But that is a bill which has all-party support. It is totally non-controversial. We agree it's important, we don't believe it needed to have public hearings to give it our support; we do believe—

**The Speaker:** Order. There's no point of privilege on that. Sorry for the interruption. We're back to questions.

## SCIENCE FAIR

**Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington):** To the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology. Minister, we are all aware how important it is to have young people of this province interested in science. Science is a necessary component of our future. How is the government working to interest young Ontarians in science careers?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** I thank my colleague for the question. The government is committed to increasing young people's awareness of science, technology and innovation in this province through a number of initiatives. Most recently the Ontario government was proud to support the Canada-Wide Science Fair in Kingston. The fair saw approximately 450 of Canada's top young minds in science and technology from grade 7 to high school graduation compete in a number of categories, including computers and biotechnology.

Over 150 of those competing students were from Ontario, and I'm pleased to report that Ontario students earned 10 gold medals and 51 medals overall, as well as 33 honourable mentions. Ontario students attending the

fair were part of Sci-Tech Ontario, a project sponsored in part by the Youth Science and Technology initiative of the Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology. This initiative will commit \$5 million—that's the first time in the history of this province—toward science and technology awareness partnership projects by the end of 2005.

**Mr Arnott:** Minister, I want to thank you for that fine answer, and I want to say that I've been informed that a student from Waterloo-Wellington, Ben Schmidt, was very successful at the science fair. Could you please tell the House about his gold-winning project.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I had an opportunity to meet Ben Schmidt of Elora, and yes, he was awarded best junior project at this year's fair.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Hey, this is important to Ben Schmidt and his family and to science and technology in the province, so why don't you pay attention over there?

His project, called RAT: Remote Access Topography, was judged to be the best of the 125 grade 7 and grade 8 projects from across the country presented at this prestigious annual event. He designed, built and programmed a robot to create a map while finding its way to a goal through an obstacle course. This robot then uses the map to return, using the most direct path, just like a rat solving a maze. Hence, the name of the project.

Ben will be a guest of honour at the Ontario Research and Development Summit to be held by the Ontario government Research and Development Challenge Fund on May 30. I think the honourable member, and all members of this House, should extend congratulations to Ben Schmidt for his award-winning project.

## HOME CARE

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** My question is to the associate Minister of Health. Minister, community care access centres all across this province are sending out notices to tens of thousands of frail seniors, telling them the bad news from the Harris budget. An 80-year-old who is incontinent and has had to make do with two baths a week has been told she can only have one. A 90-year-old who just had knee surgery has had all of her homemaking hours cut and now will only get one hour per week of personal care. A retired civil servant who is a polio survivor with one paralyzed arm and a 50% breathing capacity has been cut from three hours per week to one, and others are being cut off completely.

I've heard from CCACs in Windsor, Niagara, Waterloo, East York, Scarborough, Kingston, Sudbury—all across this province. The bottom line is that your inadequate base funding plus your new no-deficit law means that tens of thousands of frail seniors and disabled people are losing their services starting Monday, June 4. Minister, will you reconsider and increase the CCAC base funding so they can meet the need for services in their communities?

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]):** I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question. Let me say that health care in the province of Ontario is very important. As we heard earlier today, the Mike Harris government put \$1.2 billion into health care this year in their budget. It was a substantial increase of about 5.4% to health care.

With respect to CCACs, let me say that from 1994-95 to 2000-01, we have increased long-term-care community services by 57% and we've also increased in-home service funding by 77%. We've made a substantial commitment to CCACs across the province.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Supplementary?

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Minister, the question was, will you increase base funding to CCACs so that everyone who needs in-home health care can get it? You know, Minister, that ever since you've been the government, every single year you've had to bail out CCACs at the end of the fiscal year. We have a situation in northern Ontario now where eight of the nine CCACs have a combined deficit of \$20 million.

In the case of Sudbury-Manitoulin, as a direct result of your underfunding of the CCAC, the CCAC held a press conference last week and announced it would have to cut \$1 million in critical home care services, which will have a terrible effect on seniors, on the disabled and those being discharged from hospital. The result will be they will have to pay for it themselves even if they can't afford it, they will have to go without because they can't afford it or you will force them into long-term-care institutions because they can't remain in their own homes because they don't have the support.

Minister, despite a promise made by Cam Jackson in 1998, the Manitoulin-Sudbury CCAC has still not received equity funding. It was supposed to last year and this year, and not a cent has been received. The question is, when will you provide additional base funding to all CCACs and when—

**The Speaker:** Minister?

**Hon Mrs Johns:** The Mike Harris government is very committed to making sure that health care is in the communities where it's needed, when it's needed, and we take that commitment very seriously. As I said earlier, we have made substantial commitments by putting dollars into in-home services in the province of Ontario, increasing them by some 77% since the party took power in 1995. It's our goal to continue to make sure that we provide the best-quality health care services we can in the home. We know that this helps seniors and people who are at home to ensure that they are able to stay in their homes as long as possible, and that's a very serious commitment. That's why this government has made those kinds of substantial commitments, not only to community care access centres but to health care all across the province.

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## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):**

My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, I want to return to your total absence of any sense of proportion when it comes to the value of public hearings for your private school voucher program. Not only did your government hold one day of public committee hearings for the equestrian helmet bill and five days for the snowmobile safety bill, you also held four days of public hearings for the Local Control of Public Libraries Act, you held two days of public hearings for the Electronic Commerce Act and you held public hearings in connection with the Savings and Restructuring Act, the aggregate and petroleum act and a host of others. Madam Minister, we're talking here about a policy that will impact the 2.25 million Ontario children who attend public schools. It's their future that hangs in the balance and, by that, our future as a province.

So I'm asking you, Madam Minister, on behalf of all those kids and all their parents, why is it that we can't have public committee hearings when it comes to your bill?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** The biggest threat to those over two million children in the public education system is those individuals who believe—and it's not a unanimous thing—that political protest is acceptable in the classrooms. That is the biggest threat to public education that we have in this province today, because teachers went to teachers' college to teach, not to be involved in political protests. Students who go to school are going to learn; parents are sending them there to learn.

When the task force we put in place to make recommendations about how to resolve the current disputes that existed over extracurricular activities said that everyone should join together to tell the unions to help, support and encourage their teachers to do extracurricular activities, instead of using it to be a political protest, did the Liberal Party support that recommendation? Did they come out with the students and the parents?

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up. Final supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, on behalf of those 2.25 million children, I wonder if you might, just for a moment, stop finding enemies of the state everywhere, stop fighting with teachers and unions and focus on the issue at hand.

You are putting forward a policy which is very far-reaching, which is unprecedented, which we had no notice of, which is going to affect our children and the education they receive inside the public education system. You've given public hearings for all kinds of other bills which, while worthy in the grand scheme of things and with a measured sense of proportion, are not

as worthy as your policy in terms of the impact that it's going to have on our kids and their future.

I ask you once more on their behalf and on behalf of their parents, why is it that we can't have full, travelling, public committee hearings for your policies?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Public committee hearings, travelling hearings and meetings with stakeholders are all part of the consultation decision that occurs on budget bills. That is not unusual.

As I said to the honourable member, when decisions are made about what discussions, what consultations, what meetings and what hearings will take place about any of the pieces of legislation that are before this House or that will come before this House, we will certainly let the honourable member know.

I will be very pleased to tell all of those other stakeholders who think that those bills that are having public hearings are not as worthy as another issue. I don't think ranking the worthiness of legislation and bills in this House is appropriate.

Our commitment to those over two million students in the public education system stands. That's why we're bringing in higher standards, which he opposed, safer classroom legislation, which he opposed, testing—

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up.

## WINE INDUSTRY

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Minister, the Niagara region is well known as a tremendously abundant fruitland area, particularly for its grape and wine industry. I know that grape growers and winemakers have made great inroads in the past few years into new markets. Past ministers have worked with myself and the member for Erie-Lincoln on successfully bringing in new VQA legislation, direct delivery regulations and have opened up the European market.

Could you stand in your place today, Minister, and tell this House what you, as the Minister of Agriculture, are doing to ensure this industry continues to thrive?

**Hon Brian Coburn (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I thank the member for Niagara Falls for the question. Just a few weeks ago, I was in the heart of wine country at one of the many terrific wineries that are in the Niagara Falls area. My colleague the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation joined me at Vineland Estates to announce our government's announcement of just under \$1.2 million.

This project will expand domestic and export markets for Ontario wines and, at the same time, create a stronger tourism industry in the wine region. Under the healthy futures for Ontario agriculture program, we've joined forces with the Wine Council of Ontario and the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association to put the wines of Ontario front and centre across this country and in countries around the world. We expect this project to increase domestic sales of Ontario's wines by \$51

million, increase export sales by \$1 million and create an additional 1,000 jobs.

**Mr Maves:** I'm glad to see you are continuing to work in co-operation with the wine industry, ensuring that Ontario's wine is enjoyed around the world. However, being from the Niagara area, I know the wine industry demands a pretty highly skilled labour force. Have you done anything to help fill those 1,000 new positions?

**Hon Mr Coburn:** The member is quite correct that the new jobs in the wine industry will demand talented, highly skilled people. That's why we have, under the rural youth job strategy, invested more than \$570,000, and another \$2-million project will prove to be a win-win situation for young people in rural Ontario and certainly in the wine industry. This gives students from across the province an opportunity to learn about, and eventually get a job in, one of the province's most exciting sectors. In addition, the industry will benefit from a new generation of well-qualified wine experts.

This project is a joint effort between the provincial government and the private sector. I believe this project is a great resource for Ontario's youth, especially for those interested in working in the wine industry.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** A question to the Minister of Education: you're telling us now that you're talking about some kind of consultations and some kind of hearings after this bill becomes law. We don't want those hearings at that time; we want, on behalf of Ontario families, and especially Ontario parents, the opportunity to voice concerns before this bill becomes law, in the hope that somehow we can influence you into understanding something you and the Premier used to understand, that a voucher program is not in the interest of public education. It's not in the interest of the 96% of Ontario children who go to public schools. It's not in the interest of the 2.25 million Ontario kids who go to the public system day in and day out. On behalf of those children and on behalf of those parents, tell us why we can't have public committee hearings.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** First of all, I agree with the honourable member that vouchers are not in the interest of the 2.25 million students. That's why we're not doing it. That's why we're putting in place something that respects and supports parental choice.

Secondly, I've already answered the honourable member's question on a number of occasions regarding further steps of consultation, discussion, hearings or whatever with this legislation, as with other legislation.

We on this side of the House do not need any lectures from the honourable member about commitments to public education. We've put forward more money, new investment. Every piece of legislation we've brought forward to put in standards he's opposed. When we said school boards shouldn't take special education money

and spend it on other things, he disagreed with that, because he voted against the bill. When we brought in legislation that said that classroom dollars could only be used in classrooms, he voted against that. Every standard we bring in to—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. Supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** If the minister won't accept my advice, then how about a lecture from one Janet Ecker in your letter to me, Madam Minister, before you performed your flip-flop of Olympian proportions. You said at the time, "extending funding to religious private schools would result in fragmentation of the education system in Ontario and undermine the goal of universal access to education." You also said this would cost somewhere between \$300 million and \$700 million. Furthermore, you said that would have to come out of public education funding. If you are so proud of your policy, which apparently you are, then why are you afraid to take it out and expose it to the light of day and give parents an opportunity to comment on this bill? I ask you once more: why can't we have public committee hearings on this bill?

1520

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I've already answered the honourable member's question on public hearings. I'm opposed to taking public money—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** We'll wait.

The Minister of Education.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I've already answered his question, but his caucus was making so much noise that I'm sorry he missed it.

**The Speaker:** New question. The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Are hissy fits allowed in the standing orders?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** OK, folks. Everyone take their seat. I'm going to start to throw people out starting right now.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Minister? Thank you.

We were at the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka with a question.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think the comments made by the member opposite with respect to the Minister of Education were both unparliamentary and unnecessary, and—

**The Speaker:** Take your seat. Do you know what we're going to do? I allow points of order because I treat them very seriously. They are now getting abused, and I'm going to get up very quickly. It's not going to be part

of the debate any more. If you want to use a point order and you want to use it up, we're going to let the clock run and I'll stand up and we won't have any question period. It's as simple as that. It is now being abused.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much. I don't need any clapping on it.

The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka on a question.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I hope this is not considered abuse. While I may disagree with the minister, I found the remarks of the member from Windsor extremely sexist and I am offended. I would ask him to withdraw them.

**The Speaker:** Any of the members can withdraw if they would like.

The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka.

## NORTHERN ECONOMY

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** Thank you. I feel like a yo-yo over here, jumping up and down.

My question today is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Miller:** I guess the yo-yos are on the other side.

Last Wednesday—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Stop the clock. Again, if you guys want to keep it up, that's fine. I'm going to pick people out starting right now. If you don't want to be here for the day, that's fine. The same for you, member for Parry Sound-Muskoka.

I have to get up just as many times. We've been up three or four times. We're going to ask him to ask the question. A lot of it is the government members. It's your own member asking the question. I'd appreciate it if you would let him do it.

The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka.

**Mr Miller:** Thank you, Speaker.

Last Wednesday in my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, I had the privilege of announcing a \$100,000 investment from the northern Ontario heritage fund to construct an outdoor recreation facility on the Wasauksing First Nation reserve. This new facility will be used for hockey, skating, basketball, roller hockey and other sports throughout the year. The Wasauksing First Nation has about 500 residents, and they will also be able to use the facility to host powwows and other cultural and recreational events.

The residents of my riding were very excited to see that the Mike Harris government is keeping another promise, that of fostering economic development in the north and in First Nations communities.

Minister, could you tell my constituents about some of the other projects that have been announced lately which will foster growth in northern communities in the 21st century?

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka makes an excellent point: our government is firmly committed to economic development in northern Ontario.

So far during this month alone, the northern Ontario heritage fund has invested more than \$4.5 million in northern communities. Some of the projects include more than \$4 million to expand cellular phone service in the Kenora and Greenstone areas, more than \$243,000 to expand the Valley East industrial park in the city of Greater Sudbury, \$102,000 to conduct a tourism study to attract new businesses to the town of Kirkland Lake, \$100,000 for the construction of a new main lodge at Camp Bickell in the Iroquois Falls area. All these announcements further demonstrate the Mike Harris government's commitment to northern Ontario.

**Mr Miller:** I'd like to thank the Minister of Northern Development and Mines for his answer. As a tourism operator and as the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka, where many of my constituents are involved in the tourism industry, could you please tell the members of the House today how the northern Ontario heritage fund has benefited and strengthened the tourism industry in northern Ontario?

**Hon Mr Newman:** Again I'd like to thank the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka for his question. Tourism is one of northern Ontario's most important industries. In fact, direct tourism expenditures amounted to \$1.2 billion in 1999. In addition, the northern Ontario tourism sector supported almost 43,000 jobs in 1999.

As a result of the investments in the northern tourism industry in 1996, a further economic gain of more than \$400 million province-wide, an additional 7,600 jobs and an additional \$109 million in tax revenues to the three levels of government have been generated. From 1996 to 2000, the northern Ontario heritage fund has approved 141 projects related to tourism, which have totalled over \$8.5 million, and these projects alone have created 2,380 jobs. This is great news for northern Ontario.

## COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Last week, Abitibi-Consolidated announced that they're closing their paper mill in Kenora for the next three months and possibly longer; 333 people lose their jobs for at least the next three months and 147 are out of a job for good. The manager of the mill was very clear. He said that a 14% increase in electricity rates has forced up their costs of production.

Minister, there are over 20 paper mills across this province that are directly responsible for over 15,000 jobs. As you go about your process of increasing electricity rates and then privatizing electricity so that the rates can go even higher, how many paper mills are you prepared to sacrifice and how many thousands of jobs?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** The decision to pay off Ontario Hydro's debt is one that the honourable member should have taken when he was in office and the Liberals should have taken when they were in office. It's a shame that they didn't do anything during their 10 years in government. As a result, we're faced with the situation that the debt has increased, that the payments coming in from an eight-year freeze in electricity rates in the province are simply not enough to cover the debt repayments, some \$38 billion left behind by previous governments. Secondly, we spent over \$2 billion on Ontario Power Generation over the last six years improving our environmental record, and the Minister of the Environment has announced tough new emission standards which will require us to spend another \$1 billion. That's \$3 billion that we don't have to put toward the debt and therefore we have increased electricity prices slightly across the board for all consumers and all companies and Abitibi. I regret that we had to make that decision, but I think they understand that we have to pay the debt off.

**Mr Hampton:** The question was, how many thousands of jobs are you going to sacrifice in this industry and in other industries? Your phony story about the debt doesn't wash, because what you're doing is selling the assets to your private corporate friends at a cheap price and you're going to saddle the people of Ontario with the debt. You're giving away good assets and you're forcing up the price in the process.

Minister, there are literally hundreds of other jobs in this community that depend upon those jobs in the paper mill, and so my question is, what are you going to do to ensure that we don't lose thousands of other jobs in this province because of your privatization of electricity, and what are you going to do to help this community, to help them get back on the road? So far all you're doing is putting more obstacles in their place.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** The honourable member knows that we continue to have very competitive electricity prices in this province. In fact, he has complained so often that because we have such competitive electricity prices we're going to sell all our power to the States, which has higher prices. The honourable member can't suck and blow at the same time.

Abitibi is very much in favour of deregulating the market. I met with company officials in April. Let me tell you what they said the day after our meeting in April. "Ontario business cannot withstand the inefficiencies of a market that is not truly competitive. Abitibi-Consolidated has been diligent in preparing for deregulation and will be ready to fully participate." That's from Pierre Côté of Abitibi-Consolidated.

I know the company management understands that this is a difficult decision for the company, and I have offered the assistance of the government of Ontario in anything else we can do to help the company through these difficult times.

1530

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** In the absence of the Minister of Health, I'll direct my question to the acting Premier. It may be appropriate, since she is of course the former Minister of Health. As such, Minister, you will be aware that there is a new treatment for macular degeneration, a condition which in many patients cannot be treated by current treatment methods. That treatment is Visudyne. The request for approval for funding under the drug formulary for that treatment has been before the Ministry of Health for some time now.

In answer to the requests of literally hundreds of people who are waiting for approval of that to be able to start the treatment—the answer was expected by the end of February. It is still being delayed. It is being considered only as a section 8 request.

Minister, whether in your capacity today as acting Premier or in your capacity as the former Minister of Health, can you tell those hundreds of people who are waiting to know whether they can get treatment that will prevent them from becoming blind when they are going to get that answer?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** Certainly I share the concerns of the member. You can be assured that I'll certainly take the question under advisement. I hope that the Minister of Health will be able to provide a response to you.

#### PETITIONS

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the citizens of Victoria county had no direct say in the creation of the new city of Kawartha Lakes; and

"Whereas the government by regulation and legislation forced the recent amalgamation, against the will of the obvious majority of the people; and

"Whereas the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable local government, nor the provision of better services at reduced costs;

"Whereas the promise of tax decreases has not been met, based on current assessments;

"Whereas the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation have already exceeded the promised amount by over three times;

"Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local municipal government back to the

local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Victoria county"—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. Will the member take his seat.

We won't have behaviour like that from the associate Minister of Health. It's lucky she left.

*Laughter.*

**The Speaker:** And there's no laughing back there either. Coming up and yelling at people like that is a disgrace.

Member for St Catharines, sorry for the interruption.

**Mr Bradley:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'll get to what they ask for in the petition:

"Immediately rescind this forced amalgamation order and return our local municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials in Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance it has ordered on all local residents."

I affix my name to the petition, as I'm in agreement.

#### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** I've received hundreds of letters and now petitions asking for choice to attend private schools, a petition signed by people from, for example, RR 1, Jarvis; 2nd Line, Hagersville; 4th Line, Caledonia; and the town of Simcoe.

"Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

"Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or other religion, is best for their children; and

"Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as those practised in the Montessori and Waldorf schools are best for their children; and

"Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

"Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

"Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent schools as soon as possible."

I fully agree with the people who have signed these petitions and I hereby affix my signature to these petitions.

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This is a petition to the Ontario Legislature. It's dealing with northerners demanding that the Harris government eliminate the health care apartheid which is still being practised in the province of Ontario.

"Whereas the northern Ontario health travel grant offers a reimbursement of partial travel costs at a rate of 30.4 cents per kilometre one way for northerners forced to travel for cancer care while travel policy for southerners who travel for cancer care features full reimbursement costs for travel, meals and accommodation"—we consider that health care apartheid;

"Whereas a cancer tumour knows no health travel policy or geographic location;

"Whereas a recently released Oracle research poll confirms that 92% of Ontarians support equal health travel funding;

"Whereas northern Ontario residents pay the same amount of taxes and are entitled to the same access to health care and all government services and inherent civil rights as residents living elsewhere in the province;

"Whereas we support the efforts of OSECC (Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care), founded by Gerry Lougheed Jr, former chair of Cancer Care Ontario, Northeast Region, to correct this injustice against northerners travelling for cancer treatment;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to fund full travel expenses for northern Ontario cancer patients and eliminate the health care apartheid which exists presently in the province of Ontario."

Of course, I'm in agreement so I affix my signature.

#### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

"Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion, is best for their children; and

"Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as those practised in the Montessori and Waldorf schools are best for their children; and

"Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

"Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

"Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent schools as soon as possible."

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this government is planning a complete overhaul of the developmental services system, which could result in the closure of the three remaining developmentally handicapped regional centres;

"Whereas suitable quality medical, behavioural, social, emotional and spiritual services are readily available in the three remaining centres; and

"Whereas there is a distinct deficiency of services available in the private sector, including dentists, kinesiologists, psychiatrists, physicians, and emergency services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ask that you recognize that the three remaining centres for developmentally handicapped individuals are providing a community for the residents that live there, and acknowledge that these centres deliver quality care and services by keeping them open and by directing private/public agencies with limited resources and services to access the resources at the centres and to work in partnership with them."

It's signed by a number of residents from Chatham, Leamington, Coatsworth and Blenheim, and I have affixed my name to it.

### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

"Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion, is best for their children; and

"Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as those practised in the Montessori and Waldorf schools are best for their children; and

"Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

"Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

"Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent schools as soon as possible."

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

"Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion, is best for their children; and

"Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as those practised in the Montessori and Waldorf schools are the best for their children; and

"Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

"Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

"Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit—not a voucher—"for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent schools as soon as possible."

I agree with this and am pleased to affix my signature.  
1540

### POLICE PROVINCIALE DE L'ONTARIO

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** I have a petition with more than 2,500 names from concerned citizens of the village of Casselman.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que la sûreté provinciale de l'Ontario doit déménager de Casselman après 35 ans et plus d'existence, à cause du manque d'intérêt des entrepreneurs locaux de leur fournir un nouveau local de 8 000 pieds carrés ;

« Attendu que le manque d'intérêt des entrepreneurs locaux de soumissionner pour fournir un nouveau local à la sûreté provinciale de l'Ontario est la durée du terme de location maximum de cinq ans ;

« Attendu que la population de Casselman et des environs s'objecte au déménagement de la sûreté provinciale de l'Ontario,

« Qu'il soit résolu que l'Assemblée législative demande au premier ministre de l'Ontario, l'honorable Mike Harris, et à son ministre, l'honorable David Turnbull, que de nouvelles soumissions soient ouvertes avec location de bail pour une période minimale de 10 ans, et renouvelable après l'expiration ; et de plus,

« Qu'il soit résolu que l'Assemblée législative demande au premier ministre de l'Ontario, l'honorable Mike Harris, et à son ministre, l'honorable David Turnbull, de s'assurer que si les soumissions ne sont pas

ouvertes à nouveau, les conditions du bail offert pour une durée de cinq ans soient respectées.

« Nous, soussignés, résidents et commerçants du village de Casselman, nous objectons fortement au départ du détachement de la police provinciale de Casselman. »

J'y ajoute ma signature.

#### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition here concerning the tax credit for independent schools, and it's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

“Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion, is best for their children; and

“Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as those practised in the Montessori and Waldorf schools are best for their children; and

“Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

“Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

“Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent schools as soon as possible.”

It's signed by a great number of my constituents.

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it has been determined that recent funding allocations to the developmental services sector in the communities of Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent and Windsor-Essex have been determined to be grossly inadequate to meet critical and urgent needs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of Community and Social Services immediately review the funding allocations to the communities of Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent and Windsor-Essex and provide funding in keeping with the requests made by families or their agents.”

I affix my signature to this petition.

#### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I have a petition that reads:

“Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

“Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion, is best for their children; and

“Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as those practised in the Montessori and Waldorf schools are best for their children; and

“Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

“Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

“Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent schools as soon as possible.”

I affix my signature to the petition.

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** Northern Ontario residents are still outraged by the lack of action related to the northern health travel grant, and I have petitions that continue to come in.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** They're still outraged.

**Mr Gravelle:** They're still outraged.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the northern health travel grant was introduced in 1987 in recognition of the fact that northern Ontario residents are often forced to receive treatment outside their own communities because of the lack of available services; and

“Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged that the costs associated with that travel should not be fully borne by those residents and, therefore, that financial support should be provided by the Ontario government through the travel grant program; and

“Whereas travel, accommodation and other costs have escalated sharply since the program was first put in place, particularly in the area of air travel; and

“Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre have all their expenses paid while receiving treatment in the north which creates a double standard for health care delivery in the province; and

“Whereas northern Ontario residents should not receive a different level of health care nor be discriminated against because of their geographical locations;

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness and inadequacy of the northern health travel

grant program and commit to a review of the program with a goal of providing 100% funding of the travel costs for residents needing care outside their communities until such time as that care is available in their communities."

I am strongly supportive of this, of course, and happily sign my name to this petition.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### REMEDIES FOR ORGANIZED CRIME AND OTHER UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 SUR LES RECOURS POUR CRIME ORGANISÉ ET AUTRES ACTIVITÉS ILLÉGALES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 17, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 30, An Act to provide civil remedies for organized crime and other unlawful activities / Projet de loi 30, Loi prévoyant des recours civils pour crime organisé et autres activités illégales.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** It's finally my turn. It's been a long time coming, but at the same time this is all so much like déjà vu all over again, because it seems like only a short while ago this bill was before this Legislature, albeit with a different bill number. But then the government killed their own bill. I find that peculiar. I suppose I shouldn't. It demonstrates the naiveté that I have, after even this many years here, that there are things that governments could do that still surprise me, that shock me, that leave me pondering, as I scratch my head, saying, "How could this be?" How could the government introduce a bill with such fanfare? All the flags were waving and the trumpets were blowing and there were backdrops and there were spotlights and there were loudspeakers and there were microphones and there was hoopla. There was everything but pompoms.

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** We'll do that next time.

**Mr Kormos:** Listen, yes. There are more than a few government backbenchers who would be more than pleased to line up to do the pompom routine just to get in good standing. We see the pompoms being shaken and rattled and flayed around from time to time.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** I do too. Those were the good days, let me tell you. A lot has changed since then, hasn't it, Mr Tilson?

So there was this grand, remarkable, energetic, enthusiastic announcement of this bill in its first incarnation. But it was killed by the government. Heck, we had second reading debate. It went to committee. I was there at committee.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):** No, we didn't. It was after first reading of the bill.

**Mr Kormos:** It didn't even have second reading debate. Thank you very much, Mr Tilson. He's got me rattled now. I'm grasping for words. I'm shaken. Perhaps I should just relinquish my time and sit down. I've just been cut off at the knees by the rapier-like attack of my counterpart here on the front benches, but off to the side, of the Tory caucus.

In any event, we had committee hearings and the government was promising amendments. But then, boop, the bill crashed and burned at the government's own hand. Incredible, you say. And here we go, we've got the bill one more time. This time, though, the press conference was down at police headquarters, and they had the backdrop once again and they had the loudspeakers and they had the movie cameras and the TV cameras. They had the little PC caucus camera person there and all the hangers-on and functionaries with their little tape recorders making sure the minister was recorded so that just in case somebody said the minister said something he didn't say, it was on tape. It was the same bill, the same theme all over again.

1550

I would not suggest—it would be irresponsible to suggest—there is any member of this Legislature or, quite frankly, that there ever has been that I'm aware of, who wouldn't agree that crime has to be tackled, that crime has to be fought head-on. In fact, I'm dismayed, and I know a whole lot of the people are, who read some of the same headlines I did over the last week or 10 days by authorities saying organized crime will never be defeated. Did you read some of those same headlines? "We'll never stifle, we'll never crush, organized crime." I don't find that particularly heartening.

I think it's an attitude that could be just an attitude. It could be an acknowledgement by policing leaders or, if it were to be uttered by government leaders, an acknowledgement by government that there are never going to be sufficient resources given to the police and to the criminal justice system to indeed take on crime, especially organized crime—very vague in its own right—organized/biker crime. The government has, in the announcement of this bill, both the first time and now for the second time, successfully and not inappropriately talked about organized crime—the mob, I suppose, from time to time, but the mob in all its forms, and, of course, biker crime. The press has made us all aware of the extent to which biker organizations have permeated certainly Quebec and Ontario, and I'm sure the rest of Canada, the United States and beyond North America. And this is what the government tells us is going to tackle organized crime.

As I said, it would be irresponsible to suggest that any member of this Legislature doesn't share a serious level of concern about crime in general, and there isn't a single member of this Legislature who would take any glee in the victimization of people.

More often than not, who are victims of crime? Victims of crime tend to be young people. Victims of crime tend to be old people, senior citizens. You see,

really rich people don't tend to get B and E'ed. Their houses don't tend to get broken into, because really rich people have big gates and spotlights and electronic surveillance and those burglar alarms. Sometimes they've got private security guards who patrol their estates.

I'm not sure, but I suspect it's been a long time since John Roth got B and E'ed. I suspect it's been a long time since Frank Stronach got B and E'ed. The fact is that B and E artists don't break into the houses of John Roth or Frank Stronach. How do I put this? If you were going to B and E a place, John Roth's stereo system has got to be worth a heck of a lot more than the stereo system in some ordinary folks' family home. But rich people have big gates, they've got fences, they've got dogs, they've got private security. They tend not to be victims of break and enters. Really rich people don't have to walk on dark streets from the subway stop to their home. Really rich elderly women tend not to get mugged, because really rich elderly women have the car waiting for them on Yorkville Avenue. They get in the car and get driven up The Bridle Path to where they live and the driver lets them out and everything's fine.

Victims of drugs and drug trafficking—our young people are the perpetual victims of drug traffickers. Young people perhaps whose lives, for reasons beyond their control, quite frankly, because of their academic circumstances, become increasingly desperate, they're the victims of drug trafficking. We're told, and I have no reason to disbelieve this, and in fact all of the evidence indicates, that organized crime and biker gangs, as an integral part of organized crime, are right there, are critical to the large-scale trafficking of drugs and the addiction of more and more young people.

The people who get duped by the con artists, the telephone scams and the door-to-door solicitations, which we're told again are very much the activities of organized crime, the fraud—not the violent crime now, except how can you say it isn't violent to steal some senior citizen's modest savings? The fraud crime, the bunco artists, again they prey on seniors and lonely people, and it's a source of some great despair to think that there are people in law enforcement, people in government who say, "No, we can never win the fight against crime, especially the fight against organized crime." It seems to me to be throwing in the towel or, as I say, it's an acknowledgement that this government is not prepared to, and will not, and nor can we expect it to, devote sufficient resources to fighting crime.

The government says this bill is going to be its tool, its weapon of choice, if you will, for its attack on organized crime. Look, New Democrats here have supported every effort that has come up in this House to attempt to make our streets safer, to attempt to make our criminal justice system work better. Indeed, on the sex offender registry, New Democrats moved amendments to make that law tougher so it would include yet more convicted sex offenders. With its majority power in committee, the government voted down the New Democratic Party amendments that would have made the sex offender

registry tougher and more effective. Who's tough on crime now and who's soft on crime?

Remember the legislation dealing with high-speed chases and the penalties imposed upon people who force the police to pursue them in that very dangerous way? New Democrats moved amendments to make that legislation tougher, and the government voted them down. When it came time to deal with the impounding of vehicles for suspended drivers whose licences were suspended by virtue of the fact they were not just drunks but drunk drivers, New Democrats moved amendments to make the law tougher, but the government voted those amendments down.

I have some real concerns about this government's persistence in describing itself as being tough on crime, of course with the implication that the opposition somehow is soft on crime, when in fact the evidence and the history are very clear, and that is that New Democrats have been there in the forefront to give the courts better tools, more effective tools, to give the police a more meaningful arsenal. Indeed, it's New Democrats who have been standing up in this House over the course of the last six years reminding this government as often as we've been able to that there are fewer police per capita on the street today than there were when the Conservatives got elected. How can you fight crime, how can you bust drug dealers and how can you investigate sophisticated scams and frauds when cops don't have the resources in terms of staffing to do it?

There are police forces in this province, I suspect more than a few of them, and I've talked to some of them, that no longer attend at the location of a break and enter. You understand what I'm saying? You come home from wherever, from vacation or from work, your house has been broken into, your stuff is scattered all over, stuff is stolen, gone—I've got to tell you, you never really can identify everything that's stolen in most break and enters. Long after you've settled with the insurance company, you realize that that wedding ring that you got from your mom, for instance, or your grandmother, that yes, it was in that cupboard, in that drawer, and that's gone, too—long after you settled with the insurance company. Break and enters malinger; they impact on people for literally lifetimes. They're especially horrific for senior citizens, because it makes them fearful to be in their own homes long after the break and enter itself.

#### 1600

You see, we've got police forces, more than a few of them, that don't even send a police constable officer out to a break and enter scene. It's a matter of, "Well, phone in your report; we're not going to really investigate," because they don't have the resources. They've been forced to prioritize. Property offences, car thefts—I've had police offices tell me that car thefts aren't investigated either, that the reports are processed for the sake of information for insurance purposes, but that they're not investigated. And we all know that car thefts are one of the prime activities of organized crime. The containers—at least once a year the insurance industry

publishes what are the hottest cars to be stolen, because these are the ones that are being shipped in shipping containers on freighters to South Africa, to eastern Europe now, which I'm told and have read is a destination, and Lord knows to where else in the world.

We're talking about BMWs, Volkswagen Passats, those sorts of things—big bucks; big money. Yet I'm told by some police forces that they don't investigate car thefts, because they simply don't have the staffing, they don't have the resources. But the government says this bill is going to tackle organized crime. Well, let me tell you this: New Democrats have supported, have proposed and will support and will work to strengthen legislation and policies which give police tools to investigate crimes and to bust, arrest criminals. And we should give courts the resources to make sure that those criminals are properly prosecuted.

But I'll tell you right now, New Democrats aren't going to support this bill, because this bill doesn't achieve anything; this bill doesn't achieve any of those goals.

I was down at the East Mall—you're undressing, Speaker. Well, you are. I'm embarrassed, I just wanted to let you know.

I was down at the East Mall courtroom where Judge Hogg is the administrative judge. Do you know that whole courtroom is being shut down and being farmed out all across Toronto? The courtroom has been a deplorable sight. You're familiar with the courtroom I'm talking about, a provincial courtroom. It's a darned sausage factory. There's nothing about that courtroom and its hallways that could ever inspire any confidence, even on the part of victims who are waiting there to testify or on the part of the criminals whose trials are supposed to be being conducted there; there's nothing about those courtroom facilities that could ever inspire any confidence in the system by any of those participants.

Looking at the shambles that has existed there for so long and again the total lack of leadership on the part of this government when it comes to finding alternative courtrooms for those judges, those crown attorneys, those court staff, and for those trials to be held in—then I'm told of paperwork that's going to be shipped all over here and there and you can bet your boots that there are going to be more than a few charges withdrawn because of the level of disorganization that's going to be inherent in moving cardboard shipping boxes of court files all over Toronto as they scramble to find temporary interim court space. How does that instill any confidence in the administration of justice here in this province, either on the part of the general public or on the part of victims or even on the part of those people who have been arrested and are going to be tried, hopefully, and tried in such a way that we're sure that the guilty ones are going to be convicted and properly sentenced and that the innocent ones are going to be cleared?

Look, this bill purports to be about seizing the proceeds of crime from those people who acquired it

illegally. What's going on here? That legislation already exists. It's part of the Criminal Code of Canada. Across this country, there already is legislation that permits the crown prosecutor to seize from criminals those assets that flow from crime, that are proceeds of crime, and forfeit them to the state. So what's going on here? What's this all about?

And why won't New Democrats support it? We believe in the proposition that the proceeds of crime should not rest or remain in the hands of the criminals. We believe that there should be legislation like the Criminal Code legislation that makes it clear that nobody is going to profit from crime. But we also believe that it should be those people who are guilty of those crimes who in fact have their assets taken, as is provided for in the Criminal Code.

Let me tell you the difference here. Let me tell you what's going on, in a little—what do they call it?—nutshell. The Criminal Code provision for seizing the assets which are proceeds of crime uses the criminal standard for determination of a crime as proof beyond a reasonable doubt. It's a standard that quite frankly works reasonably well, works quite well, works very well and which has been embraced by fair-minded people throughout the world. What the government has put to this Legislature—and I ask members of this assembly to be very, very careful—is a bill which, rather than utilizing that criminal standard of proof beyond a reasonable doubt, the standard by which all of us would expect to be judged, uses the simple standard of a mere balance of probabilities. It's dangerous stuff, scary stuff.

What's a balance of probabilities? That means that you probably—not that you did, but that you probably—which varies anywhere from maybe, to a high likelihood, to probably. Instead of being let's say even 95% sure, it's like being 51% versus 49%. It's the balance of probabilities, and when the balance shifts, bingo. That personal property, that real property, those chattels—I think lawyers call them—those assets, they're gone. This is very scary stuff.

The Attorney General says, "Don't worry, because we're only going to go after real criminals." In other words, we have to trust the Attorney General to decide who is going to become a victim of this proceeds-of-crime bill. It's a matter of, "Trust me. Don't worry." It's like, "Hi, I'm from the government and I'm here to help you," surely one of the world's three greatest lies. You know the world's three greatest lies? "The cheque is in the mail," "Money cheerfully refunded," and "Hi, I'm from the government and I'm here to help you."

I say to you that New Democrats are not going to embrace, never mind support, legislation, a bill like this, that puts at risk law-abiding people, because it's a bill that utilizes that lowest possible standard of proof and because it's a bill that in other respects replicates and duplicates existing legislation.

**1610**

That leads us to the question of, why isn't the government using the existing legislation? We heard

from police forces, including the Niagara Regional Police Force. Let's make this clear. Police forces and 'police officers by and large want this legislation. It will make their job easier. Of course it will. So would abolishing the Charter of Rights. That would make the job of the police much easier. Eliminate the requirement that police have to obtain a warrant before they invade your home. That would make their job a whole lot easier. Repeal the sections of the Criminal Code that require a warrant before you can wiretap one of these members' telephones. That will make the job of the police a lot easier. I understand that, and I understand the frustration of police officers: underresourced, understaffed, who see lengthy investigations go all to fluff when you've got crown attorneys who are overworked and courts that are understaffed and judges who don't have enough time on their dockets, and when you see plea bargaining that's rampant.

This government wants to talk to us about going after criminals? Remember what happened a couple of weeks ago in this Legislature here in the province of Ontario, Speaker? A 17-year-old boy, Jeffrey Fleeton, who just graduated from grade 12 in June of last year, was working with his dad's surveying firm down toward Oakville-Burlington way, Milton way, was killed by a truck with an illegal oversized load. This government's Attorney General had one of its agents, as a provincial prosecutor, prepared to withdraw the charge against the trucking company that killed 17-year-old Jeffrey Fleeton, in exchange for a \$2,000 charitable contribution.

How do you like them apples? A \$2,000 charitable contribution and charges are going to be withdrawn. No trial, no guilty plea, no conviction, no record. It was an illegal load that killed a 17-year-old kid, a smart kid, a bright kid, a capable kid—it doesn't matter—an innocent victim knocked down dead by an illegal load, and this government's Attorney General was going to pull the charge in exchange for a \$2,000 charitable contribution—and catch this—that would have resulted in an income tax receipt for the company. The company would have gotten money back.

I don't have very much confidence in this government, and most of Ontario doesn't have a whole lot of confidence in this government when this government talks about taking on crime and fighting for victims. Do you remember the Victims' Bill of Rights? I sure do. I remember two women in particular. I remember Linda Even, a young woman from Welland who, while cowering underneath a blanket, was stabbed again and again and again and again and yet again by her spouse/partner, who only but for the grace of God didn't die in that pool of blood right then and there—as vicious and bloody an attack as could ever be imagined. The perpetrator was charged, not improperly, with attempt murder. What do you call it? It wasn't an accident. She didn't happen to cut herself while slicing tomatoes. She was stabbed again and again and again as she cowered underneath a blanket.

But no, the crown attorney pulled the attempt murder, plea bargained away the case for a fraction of what it was worth, and Ms Linda Even, who endured that vicious, violent attack, was never consulted. It's this government's Attorney General, it's his crown attorney. Ms Even, armed with the Victims' Bill of Rights, says, "But you don't understand. I clearly had a right. Nothing could ever have been more like attempted murder than what happened to me."

Nothing ever was more like attempted murder than what happened to her, and she relied upon this government's Victims' Bill of Rights. This Victims' Bill of Rights—I remember the press announcements and all the news releases, the fanfare, and the same sort of big talk we heard over at police headquarters just a few weeks ago, accompanying this government's; I remember the Attorney General, one Mr Harnick. I remind you, because he hasn't been one of the most memorable Attorneys General of this province. Mr Harnick and his Victims' Bill of Rights—"Oh, yes, Mike Harris and the Tories are going to get tough. We're going to protect victims." They didn't protect Ms Even, did they?

I remember Karen Vanscoy. I spoke in this House during question period about Ms Even, and I put to the Attorney General that she had been denied her rights under the Victims' Bill of Rights. Jim Bradley and I both spoke to the Attorney General in this House in the same type of question period and put questions to him about Karen Vanscoy.

Let me tell you about Karen Vanscoy: her young daughter, a girl really, shot dead with a gun to the head, a bullet through her brain, by an offender whose charge was plea bargained away. Where I come from, they call that murder—a loaded gun to the head, a teenage girl, pull the trigger, blow her brains out, deprive her of the rest of her life, deprive her mother of a daughter, deprive her sisters of a sibling, steal away the life of a beautiful child, though she wasn't a child. She was murdered. She was slaughtered.

This government, Mike Harris and the Tories, plea bargained that one away. How much time was eventually served, Mr Bradley?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Very little.

**Mr Kormos:** Was it measured in months? I think it was measured in months. This is a government that wants to lecture us about getting tough with offenders. Just this morning we got—who was it? Oh, it was the Minister of Correctional Services, once again, telling us how he's going to get tough with prisoners. He's going to make them engage in individual grooming. Is that after the Martha Stewart classes, reruns of Martha Stewart? We can do some—I don't know what—basket weaving and maybe decorate cakes, and then we'll do grooming. Give me a break. What's he got, a long-term contract with Miss Clairol? I was there this morning. The Minister of Corrections—this is what it's all about—is going to introduce grooming. Give me a break. What a moronic proposition.

The government doesn't want to talk about corrections, it doesn't want to talk about rehabilitation. It's shutting down OCI in Brampton, which has the most effective treatment program for some of the most dangerous offenders in this province, a treatment program so effective that it's being emulated across North America—do you know that?—and the Minister of Corrections is obsessed with the good grooming of prisoners. It's nuts and it's stupid, and it's an offence to victims and to communities. I find it difficult to understand that there could even be a remnant of the population of this province that has any confidence, any trust, any level of belief in this government or any of its cabinet ministers who talk about how they're going to protect victims or get tough on crime.

1620

Once again, the headlines of but a few days ago that organized crime will never be defeated—we didn't hear the Attorney General stand up and say to this House, "Baloney. This government here in the province of Ontario is prepared to give police forces the resources they need to fight organized crime, to fight it to the end and to smash it and crush it." I believe it can be done. Instead of giving police forces the tools and resources to use—the forfeiture of assets provisions of the Criminal Code—this government comes forward with a bill that's going to put innocent people at risk. That, I tell you, is a contradiction of all the things that so many people over the course of so many years have worked so hard to build in our criminal justice and our broader justice system. New Democrats will not be voting for that kind of legislation.

Linda Even and Karen Vanscoy both know they have been betrayed by this government as victims, both of them victims, one directly and the other as the mother of a slaughtered child, a murdered daughter. They went to court to seek some relief, because they felt their rights under the Victims' Bill of Rights had been denied by this government, and Judge Day of the Ontario Court of Justice had no hesitation in agreeing that something had been violated, "But unfortunately," he said, "it wasn't your rights, and the reason is that you don't have any rights," because the Victims' Bill of Rights, written and introduced by Mr Harris's government, doesn't contain any rights—a bill of rights in which there are no rights—and the courts of this province have said so.

If that weren't enough, I recall the debate over second and third readings of the Victims' Bill of Rights. Members of the opposition—people like Marion Boyd, our then member from the London area, in her comments on the bill told this government that the bill had to be fine-tuned if it was going to have any meaningful rights for victims, and the government scoffed at that. They just dismissed that criticism. When Judge Day of the Ontario Court of Justice told Mike Harris and the Conservatives that their bill of rights contained no rights for victims, we were promised there would be the appropriate amendments. We're still waiting. We're waiting, not all too patiently.

This government's sorry, sad record on law and order is not only something about which it can't or shouldn't be proud but something about which the people of this province are becoming acutely aware of and sensitive to as they become victimized, not only by crime and criminals, but as they become victimized by this government itself.

Bill 30 is about organized crime, Speaker, right? I know that if I get off topic, you're going to leash me in. The choke collar is going to tighten around my throat as you yank on the cord, so I'm going to be very careful. But now that we're talking about organized crime, let me make a few other observations. The Senate—if you're going to talk about organized crime, surely you've got to start with the Senate, don't you? Think about it: these are people who aren't elected to their positions, who have the power to interfere and intervene in the law-making activities of elected members of Parliament, who as members of the Senate hold themselves out as honourable, who, for the largest part, are thoroughly ineffective and who consume gross amounts of taxpayers' dollars. They're a remnant, a carry-over. They're part of the old pre-democratic system; they're part of the old pre-electoral system of British Parliaments, when the king—or the queen, I suppose—got to pick their favourite friends to form the House of Lords, hence the Senate here. If the Senate is a crime, I suppose that leaves senators with one label and one label only.

I want to talk to you about something else that I find not only criminal but repugnant, and that is the organized way in which the federal Liberals, the Liberal members of Parliament, are advocating for themselves a salary increase. I'm reading that Liberal members of Parliament are going to give themselves a 30% salary increase, that the base pay is going to be around \$130,000 a year, plus—

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** That's a crime.

**Mr Kormos:** That's a crime. For the Liberals to give themselves a 30% salary increase in Ottawa is a crime, and nobody is busting them. Don't forget that the \$130,000 is going to be the base salary, that's the minimum salary, because especially in government benches up in Ottawa, as it is here, there is but a handful of people who don't have a perk above and beyond the base salary.

So it's an obscenity and it's a crime that the Liberals in Ottawa are going to grease it up and slide it through like an oiled pig. I find it incredible that that attack on the taxpayers is taking place in this province and nobody is calling the police. No editorialist is condemning the Liberals in Ottawa. I haven't seen a word in the Toronto Star saying, "Are you guys nuts? Most of you don't earn the money you're being paid now."

I put to you that every MPP in Ontario now shares a riding that is identical to their federal counterparts. I won't make the conclusion myself, but I ask provincial

members to tell me, do they work harder than their federal counterparts?

**Mr Dunlop:** Yes, absolutely.

**Mr Kormos:** Are they in their riding more often? Do they have more constituency work than their federal counterpart? Are they out there front and centre? Indeed, are provincial members called upon not only to do provincial constituency work but federal constituency work as well?

Why has nobody blown the whistle on these federal piggies looking for a 30% salary increase to jack their minimum salary up to \$130,000 a year? That's organized crime if there ever was.

If this government was going to seize anybody's assets, seize the assets of porcine legislators like the Liberals in Ottawa who are calling for a 30% increase to their already overly attractive salaries. If they don't like the salaries, let them do real work.

Let's go from the general to the specific. Let's talk about a fellow, I think his name is Tom Wappel, a Liberal member of Parliament who seems to get re-elected with some—I'm talking about crime, Speaker, and I'm talking about organized crime.

You've got a fellow called Tom Wappel. This Mr Wappel, whom I, with great pleasure, have never met, or at least I don't recall ever having met him, is the guy—and I don't know. I suppose if he was going to oppose the 30% salary hike for Liberal MPs up in Ottawa, he'd have been pretty outspoken about it by now; one would have expected him to. I suspect that Mr Wappel is going to vote for his own salary increase, this great Liberal, small-L, big-L, whatever; he's the Liberal from 'ell. He's the guy who writes back to a senior citizen veteran, who's looking for a little bit of help with his veteran's allowance, the snottiest, dismissive letter, saying, "You never voted for me, so why should I help you?" The guy doesn't have enough decency to resign, never mind apologize, and he's going to vote for a 30% salary increase for himself? Tom Wappel is going to join his Liberal brothers and sisters and vote to bring their salaries up to—don't forget, starting at 130 Gs. I don't want to hear that garbage about, "Oh, we have to pay for apartments," because that's all covered in separate expense accounts—plus the pension. The pension—

1630

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** Peter, what about Parrish?

**Mr Kormos:** I'm getting to her. I've got her here too. Don't worry about it. First, I want to get to the former member, now retired, who upon his retirement was made the ambassador of the environment at \$180,000 a year. Ambassador of the environment to where? I mean, you're ambassador to Cuba, you're ambassador to the United States, you're ambassador to France. He's the ambassador to nowhere, at 180 Gs a year. I'm sure that Mr Parent—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Wait a minute. I'm sure Mr Parent is not double-dipping. I'm sure he is not collecting his

\$100,000-a-year MP's pension at the same time as he's being paid that \$180,000 salary. I'm sure Liberal Mr Parent is not collecting that \$100,000-a-year, give or take a couple of bucks, MP's pension. I would like to think that a person of integrity wouldn't double-dip like that, especially when it seems to me there's a teacher's pension tucked in there somewhere too.

*Interjection:* He's triple-dipping?

**Mr Kormos:** Single-dip, double-dip, I'm sure he wouldn't. I'm sure when he got the \$180,000 ambassador of the environment job—I suppose what really bothers me is that this is the former Speaker who thinks the Canadian Human Rights Code and laws against racism don't apply to him. This is the former Speaker who is, at this point, merely the object of a charge that he was a racist. His driver made these allegations; they've certainly been considered serious enough to go to the hearing stage. This is the former Liberal member, who retired to get a \$180,000-a-year ambassador of the environment job, who's defending the charge of racism not on the basis of the facts but who's defending the charge of racism by saying, "The Speaker is not subject to the rules of human rights." That is a crime, and for the taxpayers of this country, of this province, to be funding that sort of defence to that type of charge is as organized an attack on taxpayers as could ever be found. I thought Mr Wappel had taken the cake.

I've been following the rather tragic, sad case of a Polish family who—and again, there's going to be a lot of dispute over what ends up being the facts at the end of the day. I have great sympathy for them. You're talking about a Polish couple—I meet so many of these immigrants.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** I'm talking about organized crime, Speaker. Trust me, I'm talking about organized crime, and I'm talking about this government and all of us perhaps focusing our energies as much at elected criminals as at organized and mobster criminals, because an MP called Carolyn Parrish, a Liberal member of Parliament—she's a member of Parliament. I have met her. I was shocked when I read the newspaper coverage, because although I don't agree with her ideologically, any more than I would agree with the Tories or the Reform-Alliance, she presented herself as a reasonably pleasant person. Mind you, I didn't speak with a thick Polish accent and perhaps that meant something. But I read about a Polish family and their four kids—we all meet these families. It's a crime what happens to people who try to become new Canadians. We all meet these people in our constituency offices, and it's heartbreaking, for me certainly, and I hope for other members, to not be able to do more for families.

Do you understand what these families do to come to Canada? They leave everything. They leave their homes, they leave their jobs, they leave their families, they leave grandmas and granddads, they leave their personal things. This is how they come to Canada: some photo albums and maybe a couple of bits of memorabilia.

Crime, organized crime, and our job should be to fight it, because these people are fleeing organized crime of oppression, racial intolerance, ethnic intolerance and economic oppression.

I didn't meet the Sklarzyk family—I only read about them—but a mom and dad and four kids, two and four years old, 11 and 15. They leave everything behind. That's what happens to immigrants. You've got to understand that. That's how my family got here, that's how a whole lot of families got here. They came looking for help, and they got caught up in a bureaucratic mess. One version of the story is that it was all about an unpaid \$50. But let me tell you, Carolyn Parrish—forgive me because I'm quoting from the newspaper. This is a quote, this isn't my language. I'd have to be awfully angry at somebody and I would have to really dislike the people I was talking to to say what the Liberal MP said to the Sklarzyks as they were with her in her office with their four kids, two, four, 11 and 15 years old. Ms Parrish: "I don't give a shit if you found a high-powered lawyer to get your story in the *Globe and Mail*."

**Mr Dunlop:** Can he say that?

**Mr Kormos:** I didn't say it, Speaker. I'm quoting Ms Parrish. If I was wrong to have quoted her, I withdraw the scatological profanity.

If this is only one person versus another, sometimes you've got to give people the benefit of the doubt; of course you do.

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** Who heard that?

**Mr Kormos:** Not only did a friend of the family hear it, but a CBC reporter heard it as well. That's a crime.

I have enjoyed the indulgence of the Speaker, as I have been somewhat liberal in my interpretation of organized crime. It's not to say that this legislation isn't serious stuff.

This government talks a big game when it comes to law and order. Well, tell that to Joanne Stubbins, Robyn Lafleur's mother. I talked about her in the House the other day. This government is one of the two parties—because Robyn Lafleur died in an explosion, was crushed to death by a burning beam in the factory she was working in. This government has carriage of the provincial charges against the company with respect to Ms Lafleur's death.

The accident, the death, the homicide of Ms Lafleur occurred back in November 1999. The charges are still yet to be tried. They didn't even have a date set for trial. You see, this government talks about law and order, protecting victims. This government, which has carriage of half of the charges, isn't protecting the victim here, either the memory of the murdered Robyn Lafleur or the grieving mother, Joanne Stubbins.

1640

See, that's why I tell you I'm pretty distrustful of the Harris Tories when they talk about being on the side of victims, because we haven't seen it yet, have we? We haven't seen it when it comes to the Victims' Bill of Rights. We saw this government abandon victims. We

saw this government mock Linda Even and Karen Vanscoy. They mocked them. The Attorney General of the day, Mr Harnick, was of no comfort to either Linda Even or Karen Vanscoy, when in the case of Ms Even I brought her plea to the Attorney General, to this chamber, and in the case of Ms Vanscoy, both Jim Bradley and I came here on her behalf. Ms Vanscoy, her young daughter murdered, shot through the head. The crown attorney plea bargained the charge of murder down to something that resulted in a sentence of but months. And this government talks about being on the side of victims? This government talks about being on the side of fairness and fighting crime? I say no.

This government has revealed itself to be criminally implicated in attacks on victims as often as not. When this government has a chance to enact tough legislation, when New Democrats move amendments to make legislation better, like their stupid gun bill—you know the toy gun bill? The government said you can't sell them to people under 18, but you can sell them to people over 18, and what they do with them once they get them, nobody cares about. Well, heck, the only reason a person over 18 is going to buy an imitation gun is either to give it to a younger person or to—play with it? Give me a break—use it in the progress of a crime.

New Democrats called upon this government to close the loophole, because toy guns, imitation firearms, are a danger to police and to the public. We've witnessed that danger on more than one occasion when the police have been called upon to respond quickly in a situation that could be one of great crisis. Nope. This government didn't want to be on the side of law and order, didn't want to be on the side of community safety. This government was far more interested in talking a big game and, in the course of merely talking a big game, voted down the NDP amendments that would have made that imitation firearm bill a truly effective one and would have prevented the tragedies that we've witnessed here in this province, right here in the city of Toronto. So New Democrats will not support legislation that puts innocent Ontarians at risk of losing their property.

You've got to understand that the state is a very powerful institution. You've got 11 million Ontarians out there for whom, when the full power of the state is directed at them, focused on them, it can be incredibly daunting, incredibly overwhelming. The state has available to it virtually unlimited resources. We're talking about legislation that, when it talks about determining whether or not a crime has been committed, doesn't even employ the Criminal Code standard, the Criminal Code threshold for determination of whether or not a crime has been committed or proof beyond a reasonable doubt. Should we expect anything less? Should we expect the government to have to prove anything less than proof beyond a reasonable doubt if they're going to accuse you or you or you of a crime for the purpose of seizing your personal property?

I don't know if the government is going to have hearings on this again, because it will hear from the same

people, I suppose, one more time, once again. I'm sure it will hear from Alan Borovoy if this government were to have hearings again, who says that this is an incredibly dangerously low standard, that this is an invitation—and understand, I'm very careful—that opens the door to police statism. We don't have to go outside our provincial boundaries to talk about bad convictions, even with that higher standard of proof, when you have overzealous police and prosecutors who have only one objective, and that's a conviction. Innocent members of the public deserve better than this.

You don't fight crime, you don't fight organized crime, you don't attack criminals, you don't tackle criminals and crime by putting innocent Ontarians at risk. You can say, "They can go to court and prove their case," some \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000 later, when the state has virtually unlimited resources and that incredible power at hand. "Don't worry. You can go to court and defend yourself if you're being pursued, persecuted under this legislation."

How many people's lives, how many people's families are going to be destroyed in the course of defending themselves against merely overzealous pursuit by the state as a plaintiff? New Democrats would encourage that this go once again to hearings, would encourage that Bill 30 once again be the subject matter of some very learned commentary by people like Alan Borovoy from the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. And New Democrats would call upon members of this Legislature who care about freedom from what could be an overzealous or, yes, even oppressive state to oppose this legislation as thoroughly as New Democrats propose to.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Tilson:** I'd like to respond to the member's remarks with respect to this bill. He spent some of his time, of course, reviewing the top news stories of the week. They were interesting. But to give him his due, he did raise some criticisms of the bill. The main one, as I understand it, is the legal issue between the balance-of-probabilities and the beyond-a-reasonable-doubt tests, which most lawyers understand.

The balance-of-probabilities test is used in civil actions, which is what this legislation is all about. It deals with property, which is exactly what the civil test is doing. The beyond-a-reasonable-doubt test is a criminal test which is dealt with in Criminal Code charges, with which this legislation does not deal. So it would be most inappropriate for the provincial Legislature to use the beyond-a-reasonable-doubt test, because it doesn't have the jurisdiction to use that test.

I know that Mr Borovoy, whom I believe you cited, commented on that. Even if we wanted to use that test, I don't believe we could do it because of the jurisdiction—

**Mr Gerretsen:** Yes, you could.

**Mr Tilson:** No, we could not use it, because it's a test of the Criminal Code.

With respect to this legislation, he also talked about not having enough resources. I'd like to refer to Chief

Fantino when he came to the committee hearings on February 20. He basically said the way the legislation was created allowed the police to do other things. It gave them more time, more resources to do other things.

1650

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** Just a few comments on the presentation by the member from Niagara Centre. I have to tell you that people in Ontario looking at this piece of legislation are saying this is not going to do anything to give us more peace of mind, if you will. I'm especially worried for our general public. We are not talking about big crime and stuff like that. It is the safety of our seniors, of women, of those travelling in the early morning or late at night and stuff like that.

The police statistics released in Toronto this month—actually, it's not even over yet—show that manpower support in Toronto is way down from previous years. We can't have it both ways, and I have to tell the government side this: we can't say we want more protection for our general public to fight big criminal offenders and stuff like that if we don't provide the necessary funds for that.

We have today some 465 fewer policemen on our force in Metro than a year ago. That tells you something. If we really want to make a dent in the criminal cases, if we want to have more security in our homes, in our neighbourhoods, in our plazas, in our businesses and what have you, then I think the government must come to the realization and say, "We have to put some money, we have to increase our forces, we have to give our forces the necessary tools to do their job." I think that's where this bill fails.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I want to say to the member from Niagara Centre that as always, when it comes to these particular issues, he's very good at pointing out the doublespeak of the government. The Tories like to make everybody believe they're doing an excellent job when it comes to the issue of law and order and that they're really on the side of law and order stuff.

*Applause.*

**Mr Bisson:** But you know, reality is not the case. I know you agree with me. I hear the applause in agreement with my comments about how facetious that is, because when you look at most of what these guys have done—mostly guys, because those are the Tories—basically a lot of the stuff they've done doesn't have any teeth to it.

I remember that this government came in with great fanfare, as the member for Niagara Centre raised, on the issue of a Victim's Bill of Rights and said, "We need to have this bill of rights. Without it, the world's going to come to an end." But when you as a citizen who has been aggrieved by crime tried to bring those rights to court, Judge Day said, "This bill is not worth the piece of paper it's written on, because there's nothing in here for it to have any kind of teeth."

At the end of the day, there was no Victims' Bill of Rights. What there was, was a press opportunity for the then Solicitor General and Attorney General, the Premier

and the government members to get up and say, "Look how tough we are."

Then they say, "We're the friends of the cops." The Tories like to put cops under their arms and say, "We're your friends." But I would say they're pretty weak friends. When you look at the number of cops who are out in the community today, compared to 1995 before these guys came to office, there are fewer cops per capita today than there were in 1995. This government speaks a good line. They're good at the press ops. Man, they go running to get into the media when it comes to saying all the wonderful things they do. But when you look at it, the reality is that it's an emperor with no clothing.

At the end of the day, what these Tories have done again by way of this bill is try to speak to the politics of an issue and haven't dealt with the practicality, and there's no—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The member for Simcoe North.

**Mr Dunlop:** It's pleasure to rise to make a few comments on Bill 30, An Act to provide civil remedies for organized crime and other unlawful activities.

It's always interesting to hear—I have to agree with the member from Timmins-James Bay—the member from Niagara Centre's comments. He brought out a lot of points this afternoon. One particular point he brought out was that the police forces across our province agreed with this bill. I think we saw that originally in the Bill 155 hearings earlier in the winter. Certainly we had responses from a number of police associations and the Metro Toronto Police Services Board very supportive of this bill.

I want to just give an example of how this particular bill could be used: car theft right here in Ontario. The record for car theft makes no distinction between an auto theft ring and an occasional joy rider. The annual estimated loss associated with motor vehicle theft has been estimated at \$1 billion, \$600 million of which is directly related to replacement and repair of stolen vehicles. In 1998, more than 165,000 vehicles were stolen in Canada; 27% were never recovered.

In the end, these costs were directly on your insurance rates. The people we represent, the people in our constituencies, pay for this, and this bill addresses that. I appreciate Mr Kormos's comments, but I will be supporting this bill 100% and I thank the Attorney General for bringing it forward.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response, the member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr Kormos:** What I was trying to tell you is that in most police forces they don't investigate car thefts any more—you know what I mean?—because there aren't enough staff, there aren't enough resources for our police department. So if you can't investigate the car theft and you never find out who stole the car, how are you ever going to find out, then, who's got the proceeds from the crime to go after it? Police forces aren't investigating car thefts. I'm not saying universally and across the board, but you phone in—get your car stolen, OK? You'll find

out what happens. You phone it in. The clerk says, "Give us the information, we'll do a car theft report and we'll give you the number of the report so you can send it to your insurance company."

Cops don't have the resources in most jurisdictions to investigate increasing numbers of crimes. I said break and enter is one area of crime where cops aren't out—they don't even respond. Sure, if you phone and somebody's there with a gun, of course the cops are going to do their best to get there as quickly as they can, but increasingly we're seeing police frustrated because their response times are reduced more. Down in places like Niagara, we've got big, huge areas that are being patrolled by one and two cars at a time. The police can't get there, even if you call them and tell them there's somebody there with a gun. That's the problem and that's the reality.

The fact is that you give police tools, you give them the resources, and they'll use the Criminal Code proceeds-of-crime forfeiture provisions, like Niagara Regional Police have demonstrated can be used, as have other police forces. They will ensure that only those who are guilty of crimes are the people who have proceeds taken from them, and you genuinely eliminate the risk of innocent people being the subject matter of a merely overzealous or indeed malicious prosecution under this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Wayne Wettklaufer (Kitchener Centre):** It gives me a great deal of pleasure to stand here and debate Bill 30. Before I get started, I want to address the comments of some of our critics who say that the police don't investigate automobile thefts any more because they don't have the resources, they don't have the numbers of police officers.

I don't know where these critics were in the 1980s and the very early 1990s when the Liberals and the NDP were in power in this province. I was in an insurance brokerage and had a lot of clients who would call in with automobile claims in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, when the Liberals and the NDP were in power. I can remember people in our office often saying, "Well, your car is not going to be found because right now, if it was stolen longer than a few hours ago, it's on its way to wherever, overseas." That had nothing to do with the numbers of police, although they said at that time that their resources were stretched as well; it had to do with the severely large number of vehicles that were being stolen and shipped overseas.

But we're talking about Bill 30 and we're saying, why does Ontario need this legislation? I'll tell you. In Britain, that civilized country, 70% of unlawful activity is what they call acquisitive, designed to make illicit profits. Of course, my colleague the member from Simcoe North—I was going to say Coldwater, but Simcoe North—has already commented on the fact that the two types of victims are those primarily in certain neighbourhoods, often seniors, and of course the second

type is people like ourselves who have to pay through ever-higher insurance rates.

We're trying to redress a wrong. This bill, if passed, will allow the courts to freeze, seize and forfeit to the crown the proceeds of unlawful activity. Unlawful activity exists for only one reason, and that's to make illicit profits.

1700

It will also allow the province to take to court two or more people who conspire to engage in activities that harm the public. We have defined in this legislation what a conspiracy is. A conspiracy exists under the proposal where "two or more persons conspire to engage in unlawful activity," where one or more of them "knew or ought to have known that the unlawful activity would be likely to result in injury to the public" and thirdly, injury to the public has resulted or is likely to result from the unlawful activity. I think this is a very important part of the legislation, to ensure that we define exactly what we are discussing.

The third and very important part of this bill will allow victims of unlawful activities that lead to forfeitures to claim compensation for their loss, and it will be done by claiming it against the forfeited proceeds. That's fair. The people in my riding don't really care—and I don't think that my riding is any different than the rest of Ontario—about the legal arguments. They don't care about a position that a lawyer on that side takes versus a lawyer on this side, or a lawyer down there. In fact, if I do say so, many of the citizens of this province—and I say this with all due respect to the lawyers in this place—view lawyers as contributors to the unlawful activity that is taking place throughout this province, because many of the average citizens feel that lawyers go to too great an extent to defend the criminal.

**Mr Gerretsen:** The problem is, he's right.

**Mr Wettnauer:** I'm not saying what I believe, I say to the member from Kingston; I'm telling you this is the view of the vast majority of the people of this province, and it's time that we address some of these issues.

The legislation will focus on property—the proceeds, the assets of crime—not the individuals. That's left up to criminal law. The civil actions under this legislation are totally different from criminal legislation. However, we will continue to monitor criminal activity and we are going to enforce the law.

We recognize that we are going to be breaking a little bit of ground in this country. While similar measures have been introduced throughout the world, most notably in the United States, Australia, Ireland and South Africa, we haven't had anything like this elsewhere in Canada. The funny thing is, the biggest critics of this legislation that I have heard are defence criminal lawyers who are themselves on retainers most of the time. They are the same people who opposed the legislation in those other countries. But in those countries that have passed legislation similar to this, those authorities in those countries have successfully used civil law to seize the

proceeds of unlawful activities and hit the corrupt organizations where it hurts—in the wallets.

The key, of course, is that it protects victims from further victimization. But during the public hearings on this bill's predecessor, Bill 155—the public hearings were held in February—I can remember some of the positions taken by some of the experts that came before the committee: people like Robert Nigro, Office of the Nassau County District Attorney in New York; Mr Vaughn Collins of the Ontario Provincial Police; Mr Don Perron of the Ontario Provincial Police; Mr Gary Nicholls and Mr Gary Beaulieu of the Niagara Provincial Police; Paul Zoubeck of the State of New Jersey Department of Law And Public Safety; Lawrence D'Orazio, US Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration; and Tom Fuentes of the FBI. In addition, we had Julian Fantino of the Toronto Police Services Board. He's the chief of police for the city of Toronto.

All of these people supported this legislation. I wonder if I could just quote for a minute from a number of these people. For instance, Robert Nigro of the Office of the Nassau County District Attorney's Office in New York, and what he said about this type of legislation: "We term it the excellent second punch in a one-two combination against criminals. It takes the money out of the criminal equation and it's an effective economic disincentive. It also leads to an erosion of a criminal enterprise from within. For example, it removes the seed money.... That money, if it's taken in forfeiture, is not available for those other things. It's not used for loan sharking; it's not used for drugs or the seed money for another enterprise."

That is something we have to look at, that for every illicit enterprise, every unlawful activity which generates illicit profit for the unlawful group, that money is used for other unlawful activities. We have, of course, a rise in this province of small youth gangs. I'm not going to say for one minute that they are directly related to unlawful activities. Some of them may be; some of them may not be. Nevertheless, I do question, as do many people in this province, whether or not they are directly related.

Robert Nigro also said, and again, this is all in Hansard: "We've noticed that certain illegal businesses have been driven out of Nassau county.... They prefer to be outside our county," and isn't that what we want in Ontario? The people in my riding of Kitchener Centre, and most of the people of Ontario, want these illicit activities right out of the province, because they want to live in a little bit more peace, a little more harmony, a little more security.

I had to comment as well on an example that Robert Nigro used. He said, "A pawnshop where an individual may have been swapping diamonds for zircons, we took the entire store. In one location they were selling forged autographs of sports figures; we took the entire store. Those businesses are gone. They will think twice before setting up again in Nassau county. They are small examples but it is, in our small area, an effective way of doing it." I say again, that's what the people of Ontario want. They don't care about the legal arguments that the

Liberal Party opposite wants to pose, that you can't do this or you can't do that because think of this legality. They are expecting us to produce a bill that will pass in court, that will pass any challenges, but they want this legislation.

**1710**

There were other examples. Paul Zoubek, of the State of New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety, said—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Wettklaufer:** Isn't this interesting, Speaker? The members opposite are criticizing these experts in the field of law and order. They're heckling me because I'm quoting from people who appeared. They are experts in the field of law and order who appeared before our committee. They're ridiculing them. You guys are more expert than what these people are? Hardly.

Mr Zoubek said, "Civil forfeiture is a means by which we can take the profit out of all types of indictable crime.... Through civil forfeiture, the ability to take away the proceeds and instrumentalities of crime, we can attack them where it hurts."

Then Lawrence D'Orazio, from the US Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration, said, "Not only are the profits of crime taken away from the criminals, but asset forfeiture also dismantles the physical and financial infrastructure essential to the continuing vitality of criminal organizations. Lastly, asset forfeiture provides the means to help victims...."

*Interjections.*

**Mr Wettklaufer:** Speaker, they're ridiculing me again across the way. Law and order is not a Liberal issue. I want you to know that. They don't like this issue because they are looked upon by the people of Ontario as being weak on crime, and so they should be.

They have said they want me to quote from a Canadian expert, and this one is the expert: Julian Fantino, chief of the Toronto Police Service. They want to hear what he has to say. Well, he said—and I'm going to paraphrase a little bit because I'm not going to get into the entire quotation—that it's a well-established fact that unlawful activity is profit-motivated and that if you take the profit out of crime generally you have, in effect, cut the head off the dragon's body. "In Ontario," he says, "we have in the law enforcement community the people, we have the talent, we have the will, and we certainly have the desire to fulfill our public safety mandate" but "someone must give us the tools to, in effect, do our job."

Julian Fantino supports this bill. He supports this bill as giving him the tools to do the job that the police in Toronto need. The police in Toronto need it, the police in Ontario need it. None of the police oppose this legislation. So before you ridicule me, I say to the members of the Liberal caucus there, before you ridicule anybody else on this side for bringing forth this legislation, note that when you ridicule us you're also ridiculing the police authorities in this province. So those are some of the experts.

As I said before, similar measures have been introduced in the United States, Australia, Ireland and South Africa, and have been recognized as being effective. Our legislation will achieve the objectives that we have stated. That's verified by the statements of the experts. We are saying that no action can be taken without authorization by a court. We've made changes to Bill 155 with this legislation. We've worked with the privacy commissioner, Ann Cavoukian, in establishing legislation which would not be privacy-invasive. As long as there has been common law, property disputes have been adjudicated. That's what we're talking about here: adjudicated settlements.

"On a balance of probabilities": OK, the Liberal lawyers are going to say, "Oh, the balance of probabilities isn't the way to go." In a criminal case, you're right, it's not the way to go. But this is a civil case, and under civil law that's allowed. That's the way it's done. The court will protect the interests of people who legitimately own property or a share of property that has an unlawful origin. You complained about that before, so we made changes. The innocent party who has acquired property that had an unlawful origin, who acquired this through no knowledge, through no possibility that he could have had any knowledge of its origin, is protected.

If the bill is passed, investigators will have access to the information they need, while protecting the privacy of individuals. That's guaranteed. The province would have to prove in court that any information is necessary and relevant to the case. Health information? I know the members opposite have concerns about that. So that is what the changes will do. They will ensure that the onus is on the province to prove that information should be used.

As I said before, this type of legislation has been used successfully in other jurisdictions in many other countries. The previous Attorney General, now the finance minister, travelled to Delaware, Washington, New Jersey, the UK and South Africa. On August 2 and 3 of last year, our government hosted a summit here in Ontario: Taking the Profit out of Crime. There were over 200 attendees and speakers from Canada, the US, the UK, Ireland and South Africa—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** I'm happy to participate very briefly in this debate. I particularly wanted to note the fact that this bill, which is now Bill 30, is certainly more neutral than its parent, Bill 155. It has been neutralized in a very significant way and I think we need to recognize that fact. You may remember that Bill 155 went hand in hand with health privacy legislation that was introduced at the same time and set up a situation in which the Attorney General could get access to personal health information records. It was very clear that was in the health privacy legislation because it said that once the government got its Bill 155

passed the Attorney General would have that access to personal health information.

The public was in an uproar about this. The health ministry recognized they had a problem. They took that part out of their bill. The Attorney General said, "It's fine now. We can protect the privacy of personal health information." We said, "No, you can't. It's still in Bill 155. You're still going to get access to personal health records." The Attorney General of the day, in the last session, under Bill 155, said, "No, no, you've got it wrong." We said, "We don't think so. What protections are you going to provide for our personal health information?" We were glad to see that when Bill 30 was tabled they had indeed withdrawn the clauses that would have given the Attorney General access to personal health information.

I hope the fact that this Attorney General has seen that it was necessary to provide better protection for personal health information records, that the Ministry of Health or whoever is going to bring forward health privacy legislation at some point in the future will have recognized how absolutely essential it is to protect that most personal health information.

This bill is better than its parent bill. I would still go back to the arguments that were made by our critic for the Attorney General, Mr Bryant, when he basically said that the bill as it stands now, while it may be good in intent, is going to be virtually ineffective.

**Mr Bisson:** I'm always just tickled pink when I hear the government members stand up in the House and try to talk about how they're the government of law and order. It makes me think of Tarzan standing on top of a tree, but the reality is that it turns out that the tree is not very high and Tarzan doesn't have a very big chest. The reality is that all the law-and-order issues this government has brought forward quite frankly have either been told by the courts that they have no teeth to the legislation or they fall far short of the mark when it comes to giving any kind of rights to victims or whatever the issue might be.

1720

For example, we know that today per capita we have fewer police officers than we had in 1995, but yet the government tries to say, "We're the law-and-order guys. We're the guys who are going to make our communities safe, because only the Conservatives believe in those principles." But when you look at the action, it's quite the opposite. There are fewer police officers now per capita than there were in 1995. If you were truly the law-and-order people that you say you are, I would think you would make sure the police officers would have the tools they need to do their job and that, number two, at the very least there would be more police officers per capita today than there would have been in 1995. So that's the first point.

The second point I thought was a very interesting comment. The member says he doesn't care about what the bill has to say in the technicalities of it because, after all, what matters? I have a premonition here: that this

bill, when it goes before the courts, is going to be found to have a lot of problems when it comes to its constitutionality, because what you're saying you're going to do in this bill is based on—and get this—not if a person has been charged; you're going to have the right to be able to take somebody's assets—because you can do that now, if they've been convicted under the Criminal Code—on probability. Boy, I'm going to be really interested to see how the superior courts are going to deal with that issue when it comes through the courts.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions, comments?

**Mr Tilson:** I'd like to comment on the remarks made by the member for Kitchener Centre. Contrary to what has just been said by the last speaker, I think the member for Kitchener Centre did talk in very basic terms, because many of the presentations that are made here in this place on this issue have been legal-type issues. I think it is a matter of how we're going to deal with these types of individuals who are doing things to us.

I think if you read section 1, and I'm going to take the time to read section 1 of the bill, it does show the intent of the bill, which is "to provide civil remedies that will assist in compensating persons who suffer pecuniary or non-pecuniary losses as a result of unlawful activities." In other words, we're trying to help the victims who have been taken advantage of by these groups of people. Secondly, "preventing persons who engage in unlawful activities and others from keeping property that was acquired as a result of unlawful activities." Why should these people be allowed to keep these properties after getting them illegally as a result of crime? Thirdly, "preventing property from being used to engage in certain unlawful activities; and"—fourthly—"preventing injury to the public that may result from conspiracies to engage in unlawful activities."

The other issue that the member has referred to and which has been commented on in this place is the issue of privacy. Certainly, the Attorney General came to the committee hearings on the very first day and indicated that section was going to be amended. That was accepted by all members of the committee. In fact, Dr Ann Cavoukian, who is the privacy commissioner—and the Attorney General read the letter in the House indicating that she was satisfied that with the changes that had been put to this bill—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Questions, comments?

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** To the member for Kitchener Centre, I just want the people to recognize that he's doing what he's supposed to do. That's his job. He's supposed to malign the federal government, he's supposed to malign the members of opposition, he's supposed to tell everybody in the province of Ontario that they have the right legislation and that they're all in favour of crime and punishment and we're not. That's his job.

So I want to make sure I point that out very clearly to everybody. He has done a pretty good job of it; he does a pretty good job of that. I compliment the member for his

ability to try to say, "This is exactly what I'm supposed to do, and I'm going to do it."

But he doesn't say to the people of Ontario that this government has not funded Project P to the fullest that it should be in order to help us stop organized crime. There are 14 members in Project P for the entire province of Ontario. The OPP have only got 14 dedicated members to stop pornography in the whole province of Ontario—14 members. They can hardly have time to turn their computers on to catch these organized criminals who are involved in prostitution, unlike my colleague from Sudbury, who wants to make specific legislation to make the proceeds of pornography illegal.

The other thing is Toronto officers: there are approximately 490 fewer police officers on the street since 1995. Per capita, as the member from the NDP was pointing out, it's since 1992 that we have fewer cops on the street in the entire province.

Jurisdictions the member speaks of: in a lot of the jurisdictions this member refers to, this is the legislation that is after conviction. I want to make that perfectly clear to the member: after conviction.

As far as changing the bill from its ill-conceived Bill 155 is concerned, the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan provided us with the obvious reasons why it had to be done, but there are other reasons why this had to be done. The people spoke to them, and as far as the experts are concerned, I want to make it perfectly clear, Julian Fantino was also against the privatization of jails. Do you want to have him back up on that one?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I would like to thank the members from Thunder Bay-Atikokan, Timmins-James Bay, Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey and Brant for taking part in the debate.

The member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan talked about the Liberal critic, Michael Bryant. During the hearings, I found that when he spoke the brightest light he ever shone was when he got into a debate with Peter Kormos, the member for Niagara Centre, on whether or not they were referring to section 430 or section 462 or subsection 462(3) of the Criminal Code. Other than that, I didn't find anything that he said meant a doggone thing.

The member for Timmins-James Bay just wasn't listening, again, to what I said. I didn't say that I didn't care what the technicalities were in this bill. I said that the people of the province are saying this. I was interpreting what they are feeling.

I don't know what Tarzan in the trees has to do with this legislation.

The member for Brant wasn't listening. He said that I maligned the federal government. I didn't mention the federal government one time in my entire speech; not once in 20 minutes.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Now they're heckling again. They're saying that I was thinking it. Sure, I probably was thinking it, but I didn't say it. Since when can you read minds?

You talked about pornography, prostitution and money laundering. The police tell us that these are offshoots from the profit gains from unlawful activity. These are offshoots, and that's why they want us to address the illicit activity, the profit gained from the illicit activity, which leads to—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** I will be sharing my time with the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Bill 30, An Act to provide civil remedies for organized crime and other unlawful activities: once again the department of cute titles has been very effective at this. If George Orwell were still alive, I think he would have a role with this government to write the titles. An act that infers this will remedy all of the problems that are created by organized crime is publicity, but not reality.

I can think of the other titles this government has put forward in the acts that have been passed. This government passed a Safe Schools Act that infers the act itself would make schools safe. They then proceeded to remove the funding that provided people in the hallways and in the office. Schools across this province lost secretaries and custodians, individuals who would assist in making the schools safe.

This government passed the Safe Streets Act to address the horrendous problem of squeegee people. I had almost forgotten about it until on my way to the Legislature today I stopped at an intersection watching the squeegee people at work on the street, but I was relieved that this act in fact got rid of it.

Are we, as Liberals, opposed to the concept of taking the proceeds of crime from criminals? Of course not, absolutely of course not. I have had people in my office who have had a car stolen and were not insured for theft. I've seen the very real obstacle it presented to them of not being able to go to work, not being able to replace the car. I myself have had a car broken into. It's a traumatic event to lose your personal possessions out of it. I've had people who have had their homes broken into, who have been distraught talking to me about priceless possessions that have gone, and someone is going to make a few dollars off selling them.

Certainly we are opposed to organized crime. I've had people on ODSP in talking to me about their inability to pay rent and pay the heating bill and buy—oh, I'm sorry, that example was about actions of this organized government rather than organized crime. I'll get back to organized crime.

1730

With organized crime, we need to think about what this bill says. This bill provides two different standards: a standard for criminal activity, which is not within the mandate of this province, and a standard for taking possession through a civil court. Each and every citizen in Ontario should be concerned about the implications of the government seizing assets from individuals who have not been proven guilty of any action.

There is a parallel I would use. A large number of small businesses are coming in to talk to me because this government goes in and does an evaluation of the financial activities of our small businesses. At the end of the audit, they will produce a bill at times if they believe the bookkeeping has not been done in a manner that conforms to the Retail Sales Tax Act. But the process they use for that is, "You pay us the money and then we will consider an appeal." I believe there is a parallel there, that this government will take away the money from the business before they in fact have determined whether they owe it or not, and if the firm doesn't pay the money, they will move in and start seizing the assets without the owners having had the opportunity to make a case on why in fact they were correct and the retail sales tax interpretation was incorrect on the part of the government.

If we follow that parallel, we can see that we have a government here that's prepared to take the assets of individuals who have not been found guilty of anything. How often do they have to be right in their seizures? Are we satisfied with 80% being correct, 90% correct? Are we prepared to victimize just 10% of the people by seizing assets? I suggest we need as close to 100% as we can achieve. I believe it is a fundamental right of every Ontarian to have a trial if accused of something so that it can be determined whether in fact they are guilty and whether they should forfeit.

We hear a lot of discussion about this government's law-and-order agenda. We have had introduced in this Legislature, by the member for Brant, Bill 27, An Act to protect the families of police officers and others involved in the criminal justice system. If we want to take and crack down on organized crime, we have to ensure our police officers can do it with security for themselves and their families. This government won't pass this bill.

We see in eastern Ontario this government forcing our police officers to use a radio-dispatch system that is 25 years old. It was 20 years ago that the first PC was produced by IBM, yet they're using for our police officers 25-year-old equipment. This government has a stronger commitment to golf courses than it does to the safety of our police officers.

We have seen amalgamations take place across Ontario without any forethought as to the role of the OPP. If you want to truly understand something, try to change it. This government has changed the makeup of Ontario and created a great deal of uncertainty not just for the OPP but for all police officers as to the status of their jobs, what the amalgamations will do. There's been no consideration or care given to our police officers themselves. We have in fact, as has been mentioned by other speakers, fewer police officers per capita in Ontario now than we had when this government took office. Is that getting tough on crime? No, that's getting tough on getting more tax cuts for the well-to-do. We haven't seen a commitment.

Last year, this Legislature passed a bill for car branding so that automobiles that are stolen can be dealt

with. I spoke to a police officer last week who said there are still no regulations. Although there has been the rhetoric and a press release that this bill has passed, there are still no regulations for it to take effect.

For victims, we don't see anything other than rhetoric. I'm sure everyone in this House knows of someone who's been a victim of a crime, who then incurs additional costs to travel to a trial, to pay for parking, to pay for meals, to be present to see justice done. For many victims of crime—and I would suggest even for someone who's had their house broken into and items stolen while they were not there—it is traumatic. I would suggest counselling is a very necessary service to be provided to victims, but it's not there.

We hear all the talk about getting tough, and I wish we'd hear a little talk about prevention. This government is so proud that they can operate a privatized jail for only \$80 per day per inmate. That's the focus. Yet, on the other hand, for elementary school students we see them spending about \$19 a day. We see them continually scavenging money out of the school system where there's an opportunity to make a young person successful and not fall into the criminal justice system.

What we're seeing is a continual erosion of Ontarians' rights. We hear the rhetoric about getting tough on criminals, but there is no substance to it. This entire action itself sounds good, but I don't think any reasonable judge would want to seize items until there's been proof of a conviction for that individual. I don't think anybody in Ontario would want to see a neighbour's assets stolen without proof.

What we're seeing is the government again giving itself centralization of power in proceeding with bills, even when they know they may not have a strong legal basis but because they sell well with the title. We know, and I believe they know because they have lawyers also who tell them, that in effect this government is venturing into the area of criminal law, an area in which they have no business; it's a federal matter. Also, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is in all likelihood being violated by the government's decision to take and proceed and seize assets. A very premise of our society has been "innocent until proven guilty."

We have seen examples of this in the States. We have had members quote to us American sources, and yet all of us have watched some documentaries on TV that have shown some horrible examples where some US police forces have chosen to target people based on a specific race, a particular background, and pull them over and seize assets in the states where they have a similar law that allows them to seize assets without conviction. I would suggest that the United States is not the example we want to follow on how to tackle lawlessness. They are probably an example of how crime is increasing and getting worse. This is Ontario and I believe we have a heritage in Ontario of protecting individual rights.

It has been said by other members on this side, and perhaps said better, that surely we should require a conviction, surely we should require proof that the

individual in fact has benefited from a crime, before we seize assets from that individual. To proceed on the basis that we suspect or we think or there's probable cause is fundamentally wrong. If this bill passes, it opens the door to a wide range of, "We don't need a conviction to seize the assets."

**Mr Gerretsen:** I am very pleased to join this debate. Let me first of all say that this government is very good at optics. It likes to give the impression out there that it's really fighting crime and it's strong against crime. We saw it with the so-called squeegee bill, which affected very few people in the province of Ontario and really didn't deal with the criminal situation in this province at all, and this is exactly the same thing here with respect to this bill.

It's interesting to note, and this has been mentioned, that there are already provisions in the Criminal Code available right now that the province could use in order to seize assets that were obtained through crime.

**Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe):** Show me the provisions. Tell me where to find them.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Show you the provisions? You're sitting right next to a former Solicitor General and he knows quite well—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The member for London-Fanshawe is not in his seat. Heckling is out of order and he'll be out of here if he continues.

The member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Thank you very much, Speaker.

Professor Margaret Beare of Osgoode Hall Law School stated that Ontario currently is the province that tends to use the existing power of seizure that's available under the Criminal Code less than any other province. So the question is, why do we need this in the first place when the government, the Attorney General, doesn't use the powers that are available under the existing Criminal Code? That's a very simple question, and I would like somebody to answer that in the two-minute sessions that follow this speech.

The other issue is that this government has set aside only \$4 million in its entire budget of some \$60 billion to fight organized crime. We all know from the facts contained in the budgets we get annually that there are fewer police officers in this province right now, patrolling our streets in our villages and our cities, than was the case five or six years ago. Here in Toronto alone there are some 450 fewer officers than there were even a few years ago.

1740

**Interjection:** You should care, Frank.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I think all members should care about that. Do you need any other proof? I've got the budget for this year right here. What's happened to the Attorney General's budget? It's gone up from \$971 million to \$979 million, an increase of \$8 million, something like 0.8%, when we all know inflation increased by at least 2% or 3% just in this year alone. This is the government that wants to fight crime. In effect, it's making less

resources available to fight crime than was the case even last year or the year before.

That is the issue we're dealing with: there's less money in the budget, less resources available—human resources—and people out there want to make sure our streets in our cities and towns and villages are safe. We owe that to one another, and we in this party are committed to fight that fight. We want to make sure that people have an inherent right to be safe in their communities. Whereas this government has talked a good line about doing that, when you look at the actual resources it makes available to its own force, the Ontario Provincial Police, or to the various municipalities, you will see that actually less resources have been made available than was the case before.

Let's take a look at some of the other initiatives this government has come up with. Remember their Victims' Bill of Rights, which was supposed to do wonders for victims of crime, and how they were going to be protected? I will just quote to you from a recent report that was contained in the public accounts of Ontario. Listen to this.

**Interjection:** That's your report.

**Mr Gerretsen:** That's your report, under your watch. The public accounts office "found that 59% of victims were not being notified about bail hearings in their case." That means that three out of five people who were supposed to benefit from the Victims' Bill of Rights aren't even notified about bail hearings that are taking place in the cases in which the people who had perpetrated the crimes on them were involved. Sixty-six percent of victims—two out of three victims—had absolutely "no input in plea negotiations," none whatsoever. Remember, the Victims' Bill of Rights was supposed to deal with that and was supposed to make victims more a part of the judicial system. Well, two out of three victims have absolutely no say over that.

Forty-nine percent of victims—one of every two victims—"were not advised of the probation or parole conditions imposed on the perpetrator; 53% of victims received no assistance in preparing a victim impact statement." More than one of every two individuals who were victimized did not have any input, no help whatsoever, from the crown's office in helping them make their victim impact statements to the courts. What I'm saying by all that is simply that this government likes to talk very tough about fighting crime by setting up the Victims' Bill of Rights and by setting up the office for victims of crime, and, in effect, two of every three people who have anything to do with the office really don't get any help at all, absolutely no help at all.

This is the government that likes to talk about fighting crime, and yet there are fewer policemen on the street right now than was the case five or six years ago. This is the government that likes to talk about fighting crime, and yet it is spending only marginally more money in the Attorney General's department and budget this year than last year.

I was absolutely fascinated with the comments that were made by the member from Kitchener Centre. He basically said, "We don't care about the legalities of the situation; we just want to implement this law." I dare say that anyone in this chamber knows you had better have a law that stands on its own two legs and can be defended from a Charter of Rights viewpoint, because it's going to be challenged at some point in time. What is the point of passing a law that can be attacked so readily? For a member of the government to say, in effect, "I don't care if it can be attacked or not, it really doesn't matter; I just want to make sure the law is there," is simply a totally outrageous statement to make.

We on this side believe the people of Ontario have a right to feel safe in their communities. We are committed to that. It's one of the basic rights people have, in the same way they have a right to housing, a right to a livelihood, a right to food for themselves and for their families. The other issue that comes very close to that is that they want the right, and they have the right, to feel safe in their communities. This bill doesn't do it.

What we need in this province is a government that believes in action, such as the action that has been suggested by my colleague here in Bill 24. His bill, An Act to amend the Municipal Act with respect to adult entertainment parlours, makes it very clear that if you want to set up an adult entertainment parlour, you need to be licensed for that. It doesn't matter whether it suits a particular zoning regulation or what have you; you need to be licensed for it. That's really what's necessary.

You may recall that earlier he had another bill dealing with child prostitution. What did this government do about it? Nothing for years and years until they finally were shamed into passing it. Those are the kinds of actions people are looking for. They are not interested in feel-good statements, setting up feel-good offices and then not resourcing those offices and not resourcing what needs to be done for people to feel safe on the street. They want real action, and the real action is to deal with the individual problems of crime that we have in our communities, to work with the local police, to work with the local law enforcement agencies and find methods as to how those problems can be resolved, and then make absolutely sure the solutions to those problems are properly resourced.

Where this government has failed the people of Ontario is in not resourcing what needs to be done to make sure our streets are safe for you and me and our children and our parents. That's what the people of this province are looking for, and this bill fails totally in that respect.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Bisson:** This gives us an opportunity to repeat what was said earlier in this debate—and it was mentioned by both the members from the Liberal caucus as they spoke—that the government really likes to talk a good word, a good line, a good PR opportunity whenever they get a chance, about their record when it comes to law and order. But the reality is, and the member was

quite right, that when you really look at what's going on and what's happened on law-and-order issues since 1995, the government has put out lots of press releases, and they've even introduced some legislation that had really nifty titles, like the Victims' Bill of Rights, but when you looked at those pieces of legislation and how they stood up in the courts, they weren't even worth the piece of paper they were written on.

Judge Day, in his decision, when he looked at the Victims' Bill of Rights when a person who was trying to assert the rights supposedly given to them by way of this Legislature through the Conservatives' Victims' Bill of Rights, said the bill is not worth the piece of paper it was written on. There were no teeth in it; no new rights were given.

Then you take a look at the squeegee law that the government put out, supposedly to get those bad old squeegee kids off the streets. I really thought that was interesting, because of all the things that scare me—I think if I saw you in a dark corner I'd be more scared than I would be of a squeegee kid, but that's another story. I just say the squeegee kids at least were trying to exercise their right as free citizens in this country of being what are called entrepreneurs. I would think the Conservatives, on the question of the squeegee kids, would have been trying to find some way to encourage them to exercise their rights as entrepreneurs. But again, the government decided they were going to try to quash those rights rather than really deal with the issue of a Victims' Bill of Rights.

I just say the government speaks a really good line, but at the end of the day it comes down to the same: lots of talk, lots of press opportunity, but very little in the way of new rights given to Ontarians.

1750

**Mr Mazzilli:** It's certainly a privilege to speak in support of this bill. The member from Kingston and the Islands talked about remedies in the Criminal Code for seizing proceeds of crime, which of course you need a full legal office to do. In provincial jurisdiction there are civil remedies and that's what this is about. It's to extend those services. Most municipal police forces couldn't even undertake to go after proceeds of crime as defined under the Criminal Code, because you need probably 50 lawyers on staff to go after any of those proceeds. You should know that before you go talking about what is really there.

Something I do want to talk about—because the Liberals clearly, no matter what you're talking about, give different impressions when they say one thing in the House and they go out and tell some stakeholders something else—is a bill that presently is being debated in this House, and it's a bill that amends the Public Service Act. The NDP have been clear: they support all provincial employees being under OPSEU. The civilian members of the OPP are asking to leave OPSEU and join the OPPA, and the NDP oppose that. What we get from the Liberals is they say, "We're going to oppose it for some reason, we're not sure what," but then they go and

talk to the OPPA and say, "You know what, but we support you on it."

I'm not going to let them get away with it on that, because I spoke to Brian Adkin, the president of the Ontario Provincial Police Association, I told him what the Liberals are up to, and he said he's going to flush you out on this, and he wants to know the truth. Do you support civilian members leaving OPSEU and joining the OPPA? Do you or don't you? And do you support religious schools and tax credits, those things? Come clean and give us your position on all of those issues.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I want to thank the members from Price Edward-Hastings and Kingston and the Islands for articulating what's weak in the legislation and what the Liberals stand for. We Ontario Liberals want to get tough on organized crime. We want to provide law enforcement officers with tough effective and legal tools to fight organized crime.

With regard to Bill 30, let me quote what one expert says, author Yves Lavigne, who is the foremost civilian expert on the Hells Angels. He was asked by the Ottawa Citizen on January 14, 2001, what he thought of this bill. He said Bill 30 is a joke, and during his TVO appearance, in response to the question, "What is the likely effect of this legislation on biker gangs?" Mr Lavigne said, "None." Now, that's weak legislation; that's not strong legislation. You want to know what strong legislation is? Strong legislation is Bill 27, which was introduced by our member, Dave Levac from Brant, An Act to protect the families of police officers and others involved in the criminal justice system. This will ensure that organized crime believers are punished.

If you want tough legislation, you go and see Dalton McGuinty. He believes in an Ontario that is protected by police officers and police officers are given the tools. You might want to talk to Michael Bryant—you constantly use his ideas—or you might want to use some of the ideas that I've introduced in the House: Bill 22, Bill 23 and Bill 24.

We tell you that we want to get tough on criminals. We have tough legislation and want you to adopt it. We want an Ontario that's safe, not one that is full of rhetoric, but one that is full of action.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I heard with interest the members for Timmins-James Bay and Kingston and the Islands speak about this particular bill. It's interesting how they threw out different statements in terms of policing. I might point out that the biggest drop we ever had in policing in the province occurred under the Peterson Liberals. In one year they lost more than 2,000 police officers. That's the biggest drop. The second-biggest drop was under the government of Bob Rae, and it took us years to recover from that.

I might say that the member for Kingston and the Islands mentioned the number of \$4 million in the Attorney General's budget, but that's in addition to all the other initiatives we have; certainly CISO, which is funded under the Solicitor General's office—that's the Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario—which is really

the chiefs of police in Ontario working basically to fight organized crime. I might point out we have a lot of police leaders throughout this province, besides the OPP, who work with CISO. The current chair is Alex McCauley from Sudbury, a great police chief; Julian Fantino; Ken Robertson from Hamilton. You've got Noel Catney from Peel, Bob Middaugh from York region and Larry Gravill from Kitchener. These are all great police leaders who work together. But this organization is funded by this provincial government.

Secondly, the Ontario Provincial Police do have a budget to fight organized crime, in addition to this money that's going to the Attorney General's office. I believe the police initiative is a very important one. What the Attorney General is attempting to do is give extra tools. An expert over there said this is not a good thing to do, but I might say that we've heard from experts from across common law countries, from South Africa, from England, from Ireland, from the United States, all of whom have some sort of RICO laws to help them in the fight against organized crime and all of whom greatly support what the Ontario government is trying to do.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Gerretsen:** I would like to thank all the members who spoke, particularly the Chair of Management Board. I feel privileged that he would respond to my speech. But I'm sure that he, in his previous role as Solicitor General, is familiar with the organized crime impact study that was done by the federal government some three years or so ago. I'm sure he will agree with me that the amounts are absolutely staggering as to what the profits of organized crime are in Canada. In the area of drugs, it's somewhere between \$1.4 billion to \$4 billion per year. In the area of—let's see here—environmental crime, it's in the millions and millions of dollars. In the area of highly profitable counterfeit products, it's over \$1 billion per year. In the money-laundering area, it's somewhere between \$5 billion to \$17 billion a year.

The reason I'm saying that is that organized crime is a major problem in this province. But \$4 million extra, sir, that your government is spending to fight this isn't going to make any difference at all. It's a smidgen. We're talking here about a multi-billion dollar industry. If you were really serious about fighting crime, you would substantially increase the budgets of your policing organizations here in Ontario, both at the local level and at the provincial level, so that we could really have an impact on fighting crime in this province.

You know it as well as I do: the will has to be there, and it has to be more than just simply political rhetoric. We all know that this government is great with the political rhetoric about fighting crime; in reality, they're just not doing it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being in the general vicinity of 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

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Government  
Publications

No. 19B

N° 19B

ISSN 1180-2987

## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 28 May 2001

Lundi 28 mai 2001



Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
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Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430

Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 28 May 2001

*The House met at 1845.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### RESPONSIBLE CHOICES FOR GROWTH AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (2001 BUDGET), 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR DES CHOIX RÉFLÉCHIS FAVORISANT LA CROISSANCE ET LA RESPONSABILISATION (BUDGET DE 2001)

Mr Hardeman, on behalf of Mr Flaherty, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 45, An Act to implement measures contained in the 2001 Budget and to amend various statutes / Projet de loi 45, Loi mettant en oeuvre des mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 2001 et modifiant diverses lois.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We are beginning debate on a budget bill and I'm wondering, is there a quorum present?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Arnott):** I would ask the table to ascertain if there's a quorum present.

**Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** I wish to recognize the member for Oxford.

**Mr Wayne Wettslaufer (Kitchener Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I was just wondering if it's a point of order to point out that at the time the quorum call was made, there was only one Liberal in the House, and no NDP.

**The Acting Speaker:** It's not a point of order.

Member for Oxford, you have one hour for your presentation.

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I just would like to inform the Speaker that I will be sharing my time with the member from Peterborough and the member from Kitchener Centre.

I'm pleased to speak to second reading of Bill 45, the Responsible Choices for Growth and Accountability Act on the 2001 budget.

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 28 mai 2001

The 2001 budget has set a new precedent. For the first time in nearly 100 years, an Ontario government has presented three consecutive balanced budgets. We will continue to implement the policies needed to maintain a balanced budget into the future. This will enable the government to continue to reduce net provincial debt and the burden of interest cost on taxpayers, both now and in the future. This government firmly believes that tax dollars belong to the people of Ontario, not the government. We will continue to provide the hard-working people of Ontario with fiscal responsibility, accountability and sustained economic growth.

The 2001 budget has proposed more personal income tax cuts to complete the 20% personal income tax cut, a pledge that was made to the people of Ontario in 1999 in the election. Bill 45 amends the Income Tax Act to reduce the rates for the lowest and middle tax brackets for taxpayers. The lowest rate will be reduced to 6.5% for the year 2002 and to 5.65% for 2003 and subsequent years. The middle tax rate will be reduced to 9.15% for 2002 and 8.85% for 2003 and subsequent years. Some 95% of taxpayers, virtually everyone earning less than \$100,000 per year, would see at least a 20% income tax reduction.

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**Mr Wettslaufer:** At least?

**Mr Hardeman:** At least 20%. Some will be considerably more. This means that more than \$4 billion in additional tax savings will be delivered to Ontario's taxpayers.

The tax cut proposed in this budget will bring to 735,000 the number of low-income earners who would no longer pay taxes to the Ontario government. That is 735,000 taxpayers who were paying taxes in 1995 and now are off the provincial tax rolls. However, these same people will be expected to continue to pay taxes to our federal government.

The rates have gone down. Since we started cutting taxes, our tax revenues have increased by more than \$15 billion. Lower tax rates mean higher tax revenues for the government.

Since 1995, our businesses have created more than 846,000 net new jobs in Ontario. Since we started cutting taxes, business investment in this province has increased by a whopping 66%. Tax cuts since 1995 will provide more than \$16 billion in benefits to people in business in Ontario when fully implemented.

The government has also sent a powerful job-creating message to Ontario businesses with Ontario's Edge, a

package of tax-reduction initiatives in transportation and environmental infrastructure projects. The first three components of Ontario's Edge involve Ontario's competitiveness and include tax cuts for corporations. The bill amends the Corporations Tax Act to reduce the general corporate tax rate from 14% to 12.5% on January 1, 2002; to 11% on January 1, 2003; to 9.5% on January 1, 2004; and to 8% on January 1, 2005. This will give this province the lowest combined corporate income tax rate in the United States and all of Canada when completed in the year 2005.

This bill also begins to eliminate the job-killing capital tax by removing it on the first \$5 million of taxable capital. This will eliminate the tax from more than 11,000 small and medium-sized—

**Mr Bartolucci:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It's my understanding that the government is responsible for maintaining a quorum. Is there a quorum present?

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum present?

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** Mr Speaker, a quorum is now present.

**The Acting Speaker:** I recognize again the member for Oxford.

**Mr Hardeman:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I was mentioning the removal of the capital tax on the first \$5 million, and I just wanted to point out that I've had an opportunity a number of times to speak to some of the farm implement dealers in my community. As all members of the Legislature will be aware, we all had problems last year with farm income, and farm machinery dealers were not able to sell as much equipment as they had stored in their yard. It seems rather ironic that they would be losing money because they couldn't sell equipment and then the capital tax comes along and says that on all the equipment they didn't sell, because it's sitting in their yard, they would then have to pay tax. It seems rather ironic that one would charge tax on their inability to sell their equipment. So I think this is a very good move, not only for all those 11,000 businesses, but particularly in rural Ontario where we had an income problem in the past year.

In addition, the government will undertake a thorough review of all tax initiatives to ensure that they are effective. Just to point out one example of what may or may not be an effective tax, we all know that as we go out to purchase a new car there is a \$75 tax because of the size of the car and the amount of fuel used. When that was put in place quite a number of years ago, it was to encourage people to buy more fuel-efficient cars.

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister without Portfolio [Health and Long-Term Care]):** By the NDP government.

**Mr Hardeman:** Yes, as the member from Huron points out, it was the former NDP government that thought this was the right approach to reduce the amount of emissions coming out of cars. Now we hear from the

manufacturers of the automobiles that in fact a car on which we're presently paying what we refer to as the gas-guzzler tax—it takes 22 of those cars today to produce the emissions of one similar-sized car that was produced in the year that the New Democrats put that gas-guzzler tax on. So one might see that as a very inefficient and ineffective tax, and we are proposing in this bill that we look at all taxes in that way, to make sure that they are delivering what they said they were going to deliver when they started or we will have to change them to make sure they are effective and efficient.

The fourth component builds on Ontario's high quality of life, including addressing the gridlock on our highways and roads. The budget provides for half of the \$1-billion SuperBuild Millennium Partnerships initiative to be focused on transportation and environmental issues. Ontario's Edge will ensure that businesses thrive and grow, attract new companies to the province and continue to support a high quality of life in Ontario.

Health care is one of this government's top investment priorities. For the sixth year in a row, the government has increased its investment in Ontario's health care system, funding an additional \$1.2 billion, an increase of 5.4%. Since 1995, we have expanded health care spending by 20% by spending an additional \$6 billion. But these unprecedented increases in health care funding are simply not sustainable. We must and can make the system work better.

One of the first steps in health care reform is accountability. The people of Ontario have a right to know that they are getting value for their money when they invest in health care as well as in any other government service. The government has, and will continue to, improved its own ability to deliver accountable value-for-money services directly to the public. But the time has come to ensure that its transfer partners, who deliver many government programs, do the same.

As everyone in this Legislature might be aware, but maybe not everyone in Ontario, 80 cents of every dollar that is spent on their behalf by the provincial government is spent through other funding agencies. Only 20% of the dollar is actually spent by those of us who are represented here in this House directly. So I think it's very important that we build that accountability in all the money that the taxpayers send to Queen's Park to fund the services they need.

The Public Sector Accountability Act will require all significant public sector institutions funded by the Ontario taxpayer to balance their budgets each year and publicly report their annual business plans. This will promote responsibility and accountability to all taxpayers of Ontario. Again, it's very important that they not only know that they send it to Queen's Park and that we spend it properly here, but that every dollar, wherever it ends up being spent, is spent properly.

In addition, we will be calling on experts in the private sector to form a panel to review the role of government in the 21st century. This panel will start a public discussion on where government does and doesn't belong. We will

undertake a value-for-money review of all government spending. The review will answer common sense questions when assessing any government program or service. The value-for-money review will direct us to wasteful activities that could be eliminated and help in finding the most effective and efficient way of delivering the other services that government is responsible for.

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The government firmly believes in a strong public education system. Accordingly, we will increase funding to the public education system by \$360 million this year. But we also understand that some parents may, for religious or cultural reasons, want to send their children to be educated at an independent school. This government respects that choice. The bill adds a new section to the Income Tax Act authorizing a partial tax credit for parents of children in independent schools, promoting our vision of education as one of high standards for students and more accountability for parents' choice. The first year, the tax credit will be 10% of the eligible tuition per child that the parents pay, going up 10% a year over a five-year period to 50%, to a maximum of \$3,500.

The vast majority in my riding, and I would say the vast majority of Ontario, are religious and culturally-oriented schools. In my riding I believe all the independent schools are of a religious and cultural nature. It is not the wealthy who go to those schools; it is primarily moderate- and lower-income people who have decided, for their reasons, that they want to send their children to an independent school. They presently spend the same tax dollars for public education that we all do, and they will now see the benefit of a tax credit on up to half of the tuition in five years to help them along.

Some have suggested, and the education critic from across the way came to Oxford county last Friday and suggested, that this was a program that is going to work only for the wealthy. I can assure you that the people who attend John Knox Christian School in my riding had been doing so for 40 years. In fact, I had the opportunity to be at their 40th anniversary about a year ago. I can tell you that they are looking forward to some assistance with their tuition. But they believe strongly enough in their education system that that's where they are willing to spend that because of the quality of education they want for their children, some at a great detriment to the rest of their family and to other things people do in life. I think that we as a government have an obligation to assist them to make sure they can make that happen.

In the fall of 2003 a record number of students will be enrolled in colleges and universities. This is due to grade 12 and OAC students graduating together for the first time, combined with demographics and participation rates increasing. I would tell those here this evening that one of those will be my daughter. So obviously we really look forward to making sure the opportunities and abilities will be there in the year 2003 for all the students who are graduating that year. We are committing one of the largest investments ever in Ontario's post-secondary education system: \$293 million in operating grants to

colleges and universities over the next three years so they will be ready for that double-cohort year in 2003. This record investment in Ontario's future will provide assurance to each and every student and their parents that there will be a place for them at an Ontario college or university.

There's one other item in this bill that I would like to talk about. As part of the realignment of responsibilities for local services between the province and municipalities, the province transferred responsibility for conducting property assessment to municipalities. The Ontario Property Assessment Corp, or OPAC, was created to deliver assessment services. As it currently stands, the province governs assessment policy and tax policy. OPAC is responsible for the administration of the assessment process, which includes determining assessed values and preparing assessment rolls, and municipalities are responsible for the administration of the property tax system, including billing and collection.

Since the 2001 provincial assessment was the first province-wide assessment for OPAC as a stand-alone corporation, the government felt that a review of its practices was in the best interests of property taxpayers of Ontario to ensure this corporation was meeting the needs of Ontario's property owners, the municipalities and the provincial government. The review was done by my colleague the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Mr Marcel Beaubien, and I understand he looked at such areas as the operational structure of OPAC, including the composition of the board of directors, the working relationship between OPAC and the provincial government and the regulation which defines property classifications.

Mr Beaubien filed his report with the Minister of Finance on April 2 this year. This bill adopts a number of the report's recommendations by amending the Ontario property tax Assessment Act. The board of directors would be restructured to include five taxpayer representatives along with eight municipal and two provincial representatives to ensure that all stakeholders have a voice on the board.

I'm sure all members in the House have had calls from taxpayers when the reassessment was done, expressing some concerns about their assessment, and it seems that in the consultation it became quite evident there was not the ability to deal directly with OPAC that the taxpayers were looking for. It seemed evident that the property assessment corporation operated as the municipalities being their customers, and the actual taxpayers did not seem to have the ability to deal with OPAC. That's why Mr Beaubien recommended, and this bill proposes, putting five taxpayer representatives on the board to make sure the taxpayers' voice is heard.

The review was done, Mr Beaubien filed his report and the board of directors has been changed to make sure everybody has been heard. While it's true the municipalities have a major stake in the operation and the performance of OPAC, taxpayers who pay for OPAC's operation through their municipal taxes also have a stake

in the quality of OPAC's services. This government recognizes that right to be heard.

Also the organization would be required to appoint a quality service commissioner within six months of this legislation receiving royal assent. The commissioner would be responsible for the development and implementation of quality service standards for the corporation as well as ensuring compliance with the policies, procedures and standards established by the Minister of Finance for the provision of assessment services by the corporation. That would provide a place for individual taxpayers to call—shall we say, an ombudsman for the corporation—to make sure their voices are heard.

All municipalities would continue to be members of the assessment corporation. The option to withdraw from OPAC would be eliminated to ensure consistent assessment practices continue to be followed province-wide. Presently, the structure of OPAC allows municipalities, by resolution of council, to provide assessment services other than using the OPAC system. This change in the legislation will change that. All members will be required to be part of the corporation, and we will maintain a uniform assessment system across Ontario.

In any given year, the board of directors may modify the corporation's funding formula by bylaw, and the by-law must be approved by at least two thirds of the directors. Any proposed modification to the funding formula must ultimately be approved by the Minister of Finance.

Finally, the name of the corporation would be changed to the Municipal Property Assessment Corp to better reflect the organization's status as a municipal corporation.

Ontario's recent fiscal performance has been outstanding, the envy of the G7 industrialized world. These economic statistics clearly indicate our government's economic agenda is on the right track. Ontario's strong fundamentals have laid down a solid foundation for sound economic and fiscal policy that positions us to ride out any slowdown in the US and indeed to even outpace the US in terms of growth.

Through solid fiscal responsibility and government-wide accountability, our government is committed to ensuring the province's future prosperity mirrors the exceptional economic gains Ontario has experienced since we came to power in 1995. Additionally, the government of Ontario will act responsibly in order to guarantee the exceptional quality of life that the people of this province deserve. We will continue to focus on our pledge to make Ontario the best place to live, work and raise a family in the 21st century.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for allowing me these few minutes to speak to this budget bill.

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**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** Thank you very much for allowing me to speak to Bill 45, An Act to implement measures contained in the 2001 Budget and to amend various statutes.

One of the things I have been cognizant of around this Legislature is the fact that so much legislation has been

put through over the years with never a sunset clause in it. I am a great believer in a sunset clause, because what happened and what was OK or what was good legislation 10, 15 or 20 years ago may not necessarily address the situation we find ourselves in today.

If you look at the amendments in that particular act, many of them have to do with taxation. Certainly, there are amendments to the Business Corporations Act, the Capital Investment Plan Act, the Co-operative Corporations Act, the Corporations Tax Act, the Income Tax Act, the Health Insurance Act, the Municipal Act, the Insurance Act—many of the acts that have been in place for a good long time, going back to 1993 and the 1980s. Again, I believe these should be looked at on a regular basis to make sure they are what we need to address the times we are now living in.

I want to talk to and I want to talk about working families in this province. We hear across the way, "Oh, we're going to ask this question or make this comment for the working class, the working families of Ontario." Yet the opposition, the Liberal Party, voted against every tax reduction that we've had in this House in six years and they say they are talking for the working families of Ontario. It just absolutely infuriates me when I hear those words and yet they voted for everything that is applicable to the working families of this province.

I also want to talk about Smart Growth, something that we have to look at. We have to look to the future, to what we see Ontario being in 10, 15 or 20 years. One of the biggest problems, of course, is that the foresight of most elected officials is about as far as their mandate is. That may have been OK in the past, but not in the future. I have no problems with the past. You can look at the past, but don't go back to the past. This is something the opposition seems to want to do.

As I said, I wanted to chat about sunset clauses. I want to make sure that what we're doing in the future, what this budget bill is about, what Bill 45 is about, is the future of this province. I want to talk about cutting your taxes, something that we've done, that we introduced in 1995, that most other provinces in Canada are now doing, and what the federal government is now doing.

Surprise, surprise, opposition. Your buddies in Ottawa figure that if we're going to move this economy ahead and if we're going to move this country ahead, you've got to reduce taxes. Hopefully, some day you guys will get on the same wagon.

I want to talk about building growth and supporting our quality of life, because there is not one of us in this House—and I will give you credit for that—who doesn't want a good quality of life for our people.

I also want to talk about the value for your tax dollars, tax dollars that are not ours. They are tax dollars of the people of this province, that we only borrow to pass on to priority services that are most necessary.

I want to talk about investing in young people—most important; I want to talk about building growth and I want to talk finally, for a few minutes—and I know the member from Oxford did—about Ontario's Edge. Those,

to me, are probably the finest two words we could ever associate with this great province: Ontario's Edge. We want to have an edge. I can tell you that the successful businesses in this province, whether they be large or small, whether they be schools that are dedicated to quality education, whether they are hospitals that are dedicated to the best possible health care, having that leading edge is what does it.

I quote a comment the Minister of Finance made: "I believe the first priority of every business in Ontario should be paying wages," not paying taxes. When the minister announced Ontario's Edge, it was a package of initiatives intended to make Ontario the best place to do business and live in this great country of Canada.

It has been said—and I want to repeat it—that it consists of four components, three of which involve proposals to build on Ontario's tax competitiveness, and I want to emphasize those words, Ontario's tax competitiveness. If you don't have competition, if you don't have competitiveness, I can suggest to you that you won't go very far, whether it be in business, education or whatever. There has to be competition involved if we are to get the best possible product.

Three of the main proposals in Ontario's Edge are legislating the full schedule of corporate income tax cuts each year between now and 2005. It's called Looking Ahead, which when complete, would give Ontario a lower combined corporate income tax rate than any of the 50 US states. No Canadian province would have a lower general corporate income tax rate.

It's interesting; after the budget came out, I overheard a couple of people. Actually they were doing some scrums outside and couldn't figure out why we wanted to be the most competitive jurisdiction and better than any of the 50 US states. I don't understand that. I don't understand why people cannot figure that out. Again, competitive; we want to make sure that Ontario is the best place to live, raise a family and indeed do business.

The second one is beginning to eliminate the job-killing capital tax by removing this tax on the first \$5 million of taxable capital, benefiting all firms paying capital tax and eliminating the tax for more than 11,000 small- and medium-sized Ontario businesses. Maybe the opposition doesn't know that small business happens to be the engine of the economy in this province.

**Hon Dan Newman (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** It helps working families.

**Mr Stewart:** You're right, Minister, it helps working families, which you keep talking about across the way but don't seem to do very much about.

**Hon Mrs Johns:** All talk.

**Mr Stewart:** You're right, Minister, all talk, no action. What we want in this budget and what we want in this bill is to be proactive, and indeed we are just that.

When you look at the Corporations Tax Act, the amendments to it are changing the tax deduction for income, manufacturing and processing, mining, logging, farming and fishing. The change reduces the current tax rate on this income from 12%—2.5% for electricity cor-

porations—to 11% on January 1, 2002. It is further reducing to 10% on January 1, 2003, 9% on January 1, 2004, and 8% on January 1, 2005. Again, what I wanted to emphasize is the fact that we are looking to the future. To ensure how we see the province over the next 10 or 15 years, we may have to do things now that will make sure we are creating a solid foundation for economic growth, for jobs and to make sure that we have the funding so that we can again increase the priority items. Of course, the priority items happen to be health care and education.

It was interesting today that the opposition party had 10 questions all on the same subject—all the same questions. They had 10 questions and only one answer. I hope someday that they will finally have an answer for themselves; they don't have, unfortunately, absolutely don't have. It's very unfortunate, because how do you expect to ever lead this great province when you don't have any ideas and you don't have any answers?

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**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** It's called "Tax them to death," Gary.

**Mr Stewart:** That's right, and yet the people talk about working for the working families of this province. I just shake my head in amazement, absolute amazement.

You know, when you look at responsible choices and, I believe, a plan for tomorrow, certainly again what has happened over the last four or five years has led to an excess of 800,000 new jobs. When you look at people who have not had employment, who have not had jobs, they are, all of a sudden, now contributing to this great province. When those people were so reliant on welfare and certainly when the opposition was in power back in the late 80s, we had the greatest revenues during those four years with the highest increase in social assistance. When you don't have any answer and you don't have any plan, those are the kinds of things that will happen.

As I mentioned, if we want to invest in the priorities—priorities like health care, priorities like education—we have to have the revenues. You can only do it one way or another. You can only make sure that those services and priorities are sustainable, that is, you either increase revenues or you increase taxes. Our government's agenda is not to increase taxes, as it appears the opposition's is, because they vote against every tax reduction that we've all possibly had.

I've had the privilege in the last week to go to a couple of meetings regarding Smart Growth in this province, and one of the things that has come out very loud and clear is transportation and the infrastructure. I was extremely pleased when I looked at the budget, at the throne speech and at some of the changes in Bill 45. They're going to be looking at the extension of Highway 407 east to Highways 35 and 115—a major accomplishment, a major push for transportation in eastern Ontario. It will have such a tremendous economic ripple effect in eastern Ontario, including the great riding of Peterborough, the great riding of Haliburton-Victoria-Brock and certainly in Northumberland. That's the type of planning, that's

the type of foresight, that's the type of initiative we have to have in this province if we're going to make sure that those jobs are available for the additional working families of Ontario.

The other thing I want to just make one comment on is regarding tax credits for independent schools. When I listened to the comments across the way that we're dealing only for those rich people, those people who are very affluent and can send their kids to private school, I feel very sorry for the opposition because you're very much out of contact with the people.

I look at independent schools in my area—one is Grace Christian Academy; another one is Rhema Elementary Christian School, and Montessori in my riding—and it is the working families of my riding who are going to those schools, and I compliment them for it. All those people are still paying into the public system—absolutely every one of them—and that never comes out in this House. If you're going to ask a question, if you're going to talk about something, for goodness' sake talk about it the way it is.

I think there should be parental choice, and I highly applaud this government for making sure there is the opportunity for those people who choose to send their kids to private school.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** It's the right thing to do.

**Mr Stewart:** You're right, the member from Durham. It's the right thing, the right choice. They are working families. They're the families you people seem to be criticizing when you talk about this legislation. They are the working families of this province.

I'm extremely proud to be part of a government that has seen fit to allow choice. I thought that's what democracy was all about. When I was brought up, people said—

**Mr O'Toole:** Some days they are; some days they aren't.

**Mr Stewart:** That's right. Of course that's called "flip-flop." But when I was brought up, people had choice. That was your democratic right, and I was proud of the way.

The other funny part of that is you never hear about the \$1.3 billion more that we've put into education. You don't hear about the \$360 million we put in the week before we announced the tax credit. When I listen to people talking across the way and trying to turn this thing into a voucher system, money going into it, I am disgusted because I believe in telling the working families of this province the facts. I would highly recommend to all honourable members in this House that we make sure the facts are accurate.

It looks like my time is nearly over, and it has been my pleasure. The member from Kitchener Centre has a great deal to say, probably much more intelligently than I. But I want to emphasize one thing: that this budget is for the working people of this province, our government is for the working people of this province and I am highly pleased with Bill 45, which is looking at amendments

that are going to make sure changes will address the issues of the day, not address the issues of 10 years ago or of yesterday.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Wetlaufer:** I could never be more eloquent than the member from Peterborough just has been.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Wetlaufer:** And I'm getting agreement from all my colleagues here.

It really gives me a lot of pleasure to take part in the debate on Bill 45. But I noticed this afternoon—we wouldn't be here tonight if it hadn't been for the motion this afternoon by our House leader, who moved that we would sit tonight. I don't know if you were here at that particular moment—I believe you voted for it, Speaker. Do you know that the members of the opposition and the members of the third party voted against that? They had four months off, supposedly to deal with their constituents, from the end of December until the end of April when we came back. Judging by their comments for the last month they obviously didn't know what those four months were for, because they kept accusing us of being off, of being away from education. Speaker, I know you and all my colleagues on this side of the House spent that time in their ridings meeting with their constituents. We had a myriad of constituents to deal with. I talked with hundreds and hundreds of my constituents during that four-month period, and not one of them at any time indicated to me that they wanted an increase in their taxes. Not one. Not one at any time wanted an increase in their taxes. But the Liberals keep saying we should do this and we should do that. It all costs money, and that would mean an increase in taxes.

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Speaker, I'm going to go back to May 9. The finance minister stood in his place in this House and said, "Mr Speaker, the budget is balanced for the third year in a row." For the third year in a row. That hadn't happened in this province in 100 years. In 100 years there hadn't been budgets presented in this House that were balanced for three years consecutively.

What does it mean? It means that in the year just ended, we've been able to pay off \$3 billion of the provincial debt—the largest amount that any government in Ontario's history has ever paid off on a debt.

*Applause.*

**Mr Wetlaufer:** Thank you to my colleagues. It has other significance, though. After only two years since the last election, we have already managed to pay off 80% of what we committed on the debt in the 1999 election—80%.

We're going to continue to implement the policies that we said we would. We are going to maintain a balanced budget. We have to, because we passed legislation to that effect. I know that doesn't sit well with the Liberals or the NDP. I know that. But that's a fact of life. That's the way it's going to be.

**Interjection:** No plan.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** No, they sure don't have a plan.

What else did we do in the 2001 budget? Do you know that we promised to complete the 20% personal income tax pledge made in 1999? Do you know that's what the people in my riding want? The people in my riding are indicative of the people of Ontario.

**Mr Dunlop:** No, they want to pay more taxes.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** Oh yes, they want to pay more taxes. That's what the Liberals think they want to do. That's what the Liberals think. The people in my riding don't want to pay another 20% in taxes.

At the end of this fiscal year, 95% of all taxpayers in the province of Ontario who earn less than \$100,000 a year will have seen a 20% personal income tax cut. That's not bad. That's not bad at all. I know that really sticks in the craw of the Liberals. We always know where the NDP are; the Liberals we're not too sure about. But I know it sticks in their craw.

I just had a note handed to me. The federal Liberals have just introduced a motion that they are going to increase the salaries of the members of Parliament to a minimum of \$125,000 to \$130,000 a year. We're not sure exactly how that's going to play, but it will be between \$125,000 and \$130,000. We know that it's just going to climb, because all those members get a little stipend in addition to that base salary. So it'll go up to \$140,000 or \$150,000. How does that make these Liberals feel over here? I know, you're all going to run federally next time.

Anyway, since we introduced our tax cuts in 1995, 846,500 net new jobs have been created by Ontario businesses. Get this again: 846,500 net new jobs have been created by Ontario businesses.

**Mr O'Toole:** That's bigger than Durham.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** That's bigger than Prince Edward Island. Forget bigger than Durham, I say to the member from Durham, it's bigger than Prince Edward Island.

Do you remember, Mr Speaker—I believe it was 1997 or 1998—when the member from Agincourt would stand in this House and preach to the members of the government caucus. He'd say, "You are not on-stream. You are never going to create that 725,000 net new jobs that you said would be created in your mandate. It will never happen." The sky is falling, Chicken Little—member from Scarborough-Agincourt. Well, 846,500 have been created.

It doesn't matter what the legislation is, the Liberals always say, "The worst possible scenario is going to take place if you do this. If the government does this, the world is going to come to an end. The sun is going to stop shining tomorrow." That's what the Liberals say. That's their view. I had a young fellow come up to me last week when I was in my riding, and he said—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Wetlaufer:** No, he's in my riding. He said, "Mr Wetlaufer, why do the Liberals always oppose everything you government members propose?" I said, "Well, that's what it's like to be a Liberal." He said, "I don't understand." I said, "When they were in government, they said they were balancing the budget, but they added

to the debt." He said, "Yes." I said, "Now that they're in opposition, they say they're in favour of tax cuts, but, on the other hand, they always vote against them. Then they stand up in the House and always ask questions like, 'Why don't we provide more funding for this item, and why don't we provide more funding for that item?' That just adds money, money, money. It would present a tremendous strain on our resources if we were going to do everything the Liberals told us to do." He said, "I still don't understand why they would want to be Liberals," and I said, "Neither do I."

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** Spend-o-meter.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** That's right: spend-o-meter.

Since we started cutting taxes, business investment in this province has increased by 66%. What does that mean? On Thursday morning last week, I believe—and there was another morning last week, but I can't remember; I was so busy last week that I can't remember what mornings they were. Maybe Tuesday morning and Thursday morning or Wednesday morning and Thursday morning. I opened up a couple of businesses in my riding. One of them was a drug store. At that particular store opening—it was a Shoppers Drug Mart; Liz Mutton at the corner of Stanley Park and River Road runs a very good shop—I said to the people gathered, "I wonder if you would permit me just a small, small mention of political intent here." You know me: I would never be political, but in this particular instance it seemed to apply. I said, "Here we have an individual who is putting everything, all her personal resources, into opening this business and providing jobs for all these people in this store. Then we get criticized by the members of the official opposition, the Liberals, and the real opposition, the NDP, for providing tax cuts for these small businesses which create 80% of the jobs in this province. They don't want us to provide these tax cuts for these businesses under this budget so that more jobs can be created, more benefits can be provided to these employees." That's what this is all about, and that's what we're doing.

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I do have to comment on something else that's really near and dear to my heart because I worked on this for a couple of years, did research on it, spoke with individuals and spoke with a lot of people in my riding who are the beneficiaries of this proposal in the budget, and that is the tax credit for independent schools—I really can't help it. We've had letters to our government from the fair funding—Tony Kamphuis. His address is 108 Edward Court in Smithville, Ontario, and the postal code is L0R 2A0. Tony wrote to us urging swift passage of the bill. The Orangeville Christian School, at PO Box 176, Orangeville, L9W 2Z6—you can tell I'm older; I think the students are now saying "zee"—wrote to us urging swift passage of the bill. We've had a letter from the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, 617 Garner Road East, Ancaster, Ontario, L9G 3K9. The person there who wrote to us was Tena Boven, the administrative assistant to the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools. I believe

that is located in Ted McMeekin's riding, so I'm sure he's very interested in that. All these people are urging swift passage of the bill allowing tax credits for independent schools. We have another letter here from Barbara A. Bierman, again from the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, and she has sent a number of petitions from people who support Holland Marsh District Christian School in Newmarket.

Right now, we are having an influx of petitions. We are receiving hundreds of petitions with thousands of names on them, urging us to pass this bill swiftly. A couple of my colleagues right here are handing up some. I've got a whole bunch in my desk here. I just can't keep up with it, we're getting so many.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** Would you like to read from it?

**Mr Wetlaufer:** If I could, please. Steve Gilchrist—where are you the member from?

**Mr Gilchrist:** Scarborough East.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** In the petition, she's talking about wide parental and student choice being the best possible education for students and she talks about education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion. I can tell you that in my own riding we have a strong contingent of Mennonites. We have Rockway Mennonite school, which is an extremely good secondary institution, and the parents and students are going to benefit, as are many students and parents of St Jude's School-Scholar's Hall and a number of Christian schools in my riding.

Mr Gilchrist, you can have this back. Thank you very much.

It just goes on and on. Even more important, I think, is that in the past couple of weeks there have been a number of letters written to the editor, as well as—

**Mr O'Toole:** You're on TV.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** Yes, I'm on TV and I forgot I didn't have these out. Annita Boer from Kitchener writes to the editor of the Kitchener-Waterloo Record: "It's not just for the rich. Regarding the provincial tax credit for private schools, my family is neither financially wealthy nor elite. We are hard-working Canadians who desire a Christian education for our children. I am a graduate of the Christian school system and am thankful for the financial sacrifices my parents made to make this possible. We are excited about this proposed tax credit."

I want to point out to the members of the Liberal Party, and the members of the NDP, for that matter—but the Liberals are the ones who are the most vociferous about this—that these people are paying taxes. They pay the full education tax, as does every other Ontario citizen, and these people are asking for a bit of a credit to pay for a part of the tuition they pay to have their children educated in a religious institution because they value that religious education. I know there are a lot of members in that Liberal caucus who do not agree with the position that has been espoused by the member of the Liberal Party.

**Interjection:** Which position?

**Mr Wetlaufer:** I know—which position? That is so true. On this day he says, "I am opposed to it," and another day he says, "I think we'll provide it, but it's just a matter of when." We would like to know when, and we would like to know how the Liberal leader proposes to give some kind of funding for those students or their parents who are going to these independent schools. For him to say that this Ontario tax credit for independent schools is equivalent to a charter or to a voucher system is absolutely unconscionable. I take deep offence at that, as do the people from my riding.

I have another one, and this is written by Vivian Walker. She's from Waterloo. I'm only going to quote in part, and you can have a copy of this article. She says, "St John's-Kilmarnock in Waterloo region, for example, was listed as independent. In fact, despite the religious diversity of its students, the school has a strong Anglican heritage and the curriculum includes an excellent grounding in the Anglican faith, as well as exposure to different religious traditions.... When we moved here, the decision to have our children attend was cemented by its strong Christian values and teachings."

But you in the Liberal Party would deny these people any financial contribution, in spite of the fact that the United Nations ruled two years ago that they should have some consideration. How unconscionable.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** What do they have against Jewish schools?

**Mr Wetlaufer:** That's true; that's a really good point, I say to the minister—to the Chair of Management Board. I should know his exact title; I'm his parliamentary assistant. I should know. He says, "What do the Liberals have against Jewish schools?" What do the Liberals have against other faith-based schools: Muslim, Asian, Christian schools? What is your problem?

**Interjection:** Montessori schools.

**Mr Wetlaufer:** What do you have against Montessori schools or Waldorf schools? You cannot bulk them all into Upper Canada College, as the leader of the Liberal Party would like to do.

I have here some other letters. I do have some trouble reading some of the signatures, but this one here is quite easy to read. It's from Grace Buisman of RR 4, Bradford, Ontario. Her postal code is L3Z 2A6. She says:

"Congratulations to the PC government. Thank you for representing those of us in your riding who send children to independent schools. You have the guts to do what is fair for all parents in the province. The equity and education tax credit unveiled during the presentation of the budget on May 9 is an appropriate way to support parents who choose to send their children to independent schools. You have now moved from supporting these parents' choices to empowering their choices, and for that I wish to say thank you."

"I have supported Christian independent schools for some time now. The parents making these choices do so because they seek a certain religious framework for their children, one that supports the values and beliefs held in the home. These parents simply cannot find what they

need in the publicly funded system. Anyone desiring a Christian perspective in their child's education is welcome in these schools, provided they can support the philosophy and mission of the schools. These schools do provide education which meets or exceeds the government's standards for literacy, numeracy and civic-mindedness.

"I am not wealthy or elite. I am part of a hard-working, middle-class family who struggles and sacrifices to pay both taxes to the publicly funded system and tuition to the school of my choosing. The proposed tax credit will be welcome breathing space."

She goes on, but suffice it to say I am receiving letters like this, I am receiving phone calls. I have received hundreds of letters and phone calls in my riding. I cannot begin to tell you how well received this is in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bartolucci:** The members for Oxford, Peterborough and Kitchener Centre forgot to inform the people of Ontario that in the 60 minutes they spoke the people of Ontario paid out \$218,000 on interest on the debt Mike Harris has created over the course of the last six years. In their own budget document, on page 69, it clearly shows that \$24 billion has been added to the debt. I won't go over the two minutes, Speaker.

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He's added \$24 billion to the provincial debt, which was at \$90 billion in 1994-95, and presently, according to this document, in actual 1999-2000, it was approximately \$114 billion. Translated in real figures, that means that every hour we spend taxpayers' dollars to the tune of \$218,000 on the debt Mike Harris created. That's just interest. Imagine what that \$218,000 would do to the hospitals across this province every hour? So the speakers forgot to mention that.

They also forgot to mention that the budget provides for \$2.2 billion in corporate tax relief—a tax cut—for corporations. That's why we believe that this budget fails the working families of Ontario: because it puts corporations before the working families of Ontario. And certainly we cannot believe that they didn't mention that this government is investing \$300 million less in post-secondary institutions than they did five years ago, than we did five years ago.

They also forgot to tell the people of Ontario that this government is taking out—they say \$300 million. We know now it's closer to \$500 million. In fact, some on the government side have estimated it's going to be \$700 million out of the public system to fund their private school voucher system. Leave no mistaken impression in the minds of the people of Ontario, this is a private school voucher system that this government is talking about. That's why—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you very much. Further questions or comments?

**Mr O'Toole:** I'm simply overwhelmed by the comments from the member for Peterborough and the

member for Kitchener Centre that I'm almost speechless, but I will draw a deep breath here and persevere.

I really think they covered most of the salient issues, and I think they did respectfully read into the record—some of the people—I can only speak in my riding—have overwhelmingly supported the education tax credit. To focus on the main thing here of parent responsibility—and I think that there are other measures. I'm certain we'll hear some of them later on tonight.

I was going to ask the member for Sudbury—and I know he's a former teacher—if he's collecting the pension yet, because I know he was a teacher for a number of years.

**Interjection:** He left.

**Mr O'Toole:** I hate to say that, but he's leaving the House now. He could easily be collecting the pension. I wouldn't know, but it would be fair if in his comments that he—but that doesn't disqualify him from participating in the debate.

I really think in education we need to make sure that we support public education strongly, as we have—an additional \$360 million. It appears that Jim Smith, the president of OECTA, has somewhat made it a bit clearer that perhaps there will be extracurricular, perhaps there won't.

But what puzzles me at the end of the day is when I look at Dalton McGuinty every day, 11 or 12 questions a day, and I see sitting behind him Monte Kwinter and Mr Bryant. They don't seem to have it. They say one thing to one group and a completely different thing to another group. It's typical of the development of their policy. They're populists and their values are rooted very shallowly. I think that this opportunity—parents today are clearly paying twice. They're already paying all of the taxes. What they're looking for is a meagre tax break, and I think that it's important.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. I want to once again caution all members that you are in contravention of the Speaker's ruling if you refer to another member's absence.

Further questions and comments?

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'm pleased to respond to the members for Oxford, Peterborough and Kitchener. In particular, the members for Peterborough and Kitchener seem to be extremely agitated that anyone would be opposed to the policy of extending public funding to private and to religious schools. Well, I remind you it was Minister Ecker and Premier Harris who couldn't have been clearer, saying they were totally against it. This is a letter that's about a year old now, and it goes on to say, "As set out in this submission, extending funding to religious private schools would result in fragmentation of the educational system in Ontario and undermine the goal of universal access to education. We trust that the government of Ontario's position as outlined in this letter is clear." So it was Ms Ecker, the Minister of Education, who spelled it out clearly. So if you're mad at somebody, be mad at her.

The Premier actually went on to say, "Complying with the demand to extend funding would remove from our existing public education system at least \$300 million with some estimates as high as \$700 million. Obviously such an action would run directly counter to Ontario's long-standing commitment to public education." So when the member for Peterborough gets angry at someone who says they are opposed to this plan, remember that it was Minister Ecker and the Premier of the province who said, "We are totally opposed to this. Do you understand our policy? We will not do it."

The member for Peterborough said he objects to calling it a voucher system. It is a voucher system. If you submit a bill for \$7,000, you get back a cheque for \$3,500. It's that clear. That's exactly how it works. You submit the bill and say, "I paid \$7,000 tuition," and you get back a cheque for \$3,500 from the government of Ontario. That is a voucher system. So you can get angry, but get angry at your own minister.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I want to be quite clear in the two-minute response I have that I and the rest of New Democrats here in our caucus and across the province disagree entirely with the direction the government is taking when it comes to providing for what is a voucher for people to opt out of the public system into private schools.

First of all, the government tries to make out that this is not a voucher. The only difference is that rather than getting your voucher up front in September, you're going to be getting it by way of a tax credit in the month of May when your tax return comes in. So let's be clear: at the end of the day this is a voucher system.

I personally disagree with this on a number of bases. I, as a taxpayer and a citizen of this province, am very worried about what this is going to do to our system of public education, taking away much-needed resources from a system that's already been gutted by almost \$2 billion by the provincial government since 1995.

The other issue—and I'm surprised the Tories aren't worried about this when they talk about accountability—is that we're prepared to allow parents to pull their children out of the public system, put them into a private system, use public dollars to subsidize that and then we as taxpayers and as citizens of this province ask for no accountability for what happens in those schools. I for one disagree with that.

If people want to have their children educated in a religious belief, that's fine. I understand that, I accept it and I think that's great. But if we want to institute some sort of public policy to make that happen, then make it happen within our public system of education. There's no reason we can't allow for religious tolerance within our public system in a way that's supervised, in a way that makes sure children are still getting what is the basis of the curriculum that is supposed to be taught in our public system. But for parents to opt out and say, "I'm going to send my child to a private school," and say, "I like private schools, but, by the way, give me some tax dollars," I think is a bit of a contradiction. Second, there

is no accountability for what those children will learn outside the religious curriculum when it comes to the academic, and that scares me deeply.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from the government side has two minutes to reply.

**Mr Hardeman:** I'd like to thank the members from Durham, Sudbury, Scarborough-Agincourt and Timmins-James Bay for their comments.

I want to say to the members opposite that I'm not surprised they are not in agreement with the presentations that were made or the budget bill and the budget itself. Obviously they have not been supportive of any past tax cuts or any fairness we have tried to bring to the tax system. They have opposed each and every one of those initiatives, so I think it's not surprising that they've also decided to oppose this budget, which of course implements further tax fairness and support for parents in the education system. Not only that, but it puts in some certainty for businesses in our community to increase investment, create jobs and build an economic climate that can support all the services—the health care services, the education services and the social services—we require in our society to build the kind of community we want here. 2000

One of those areas, of course, is the part of Ontario's Edge which enshrines in law the tax reduction for business investment. Obviously, if someone is going to invest in our community, they can't do that, based on what the tax is today, not knowing that it will be favourable next year and the following year when they actually get into production from their investment. I think it's very important that the corporate tax reduction we've put in place in this bill is now going to be in law for the five-year period to make sure that if someone comes in and invests in our economy, they will put that investment in, be able to employ and pay people who will pay taxes and be guaranteed that tax rate over the long period of time. I think that's one of the most important parts of this budget bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr Phillips:** I'm pleased to join the debate and would like to say I'll be sharing my time with our members from Brant and from Sarnia-Lambton.

I'm pleased to begin the debate for our party on Bill 45. I think everyone in Ontario should recognize that it's quite a large bill. It amends 22 different acts in the province of Ontario, some with some very wide-ranging impact.

My leader, Dalton McGuinty, tried several times today to get the government to agree that particularly the portion dealing with tax credits—the vouchers to private and religious schools—be separated from this bill and there be some significant public hearings.

I would say that, in my opinion, this particular aspect of the legislation has the potential to fundamentally change the province of Ontario. I truly believe that. I think most of the people of Ontario are probably aware of what it does. When it's implemented it will essentially

provide a voucher for people who pay tuition to private schools or to religious private schools. You submit your tuition bill, up to \$7,000, to the province of Ontario, and you will get half of that back in the form of a cheque.

In my opinion, that is a voucher. That's exactly what it is. You submit the bill, you get a cheque back from the province of Ontario, from the taxpayers. The government has said this is a matter of fairness. They said the Roman Catholic separate schools in Ontario get it, so why shouldn't other religious communities get it?

There are a couple of things I'd like to say. One is that I took the Minister of Education at her word, because I agree with her, when she said that doing this—and I realize this is an enormously sensitive issue for the province of Ontario. She said that were we to do this, were we to extend funding, "extending funding to religious private schools would result in fragmentation of the educational system in Ontario and undermine the goal of universal access to education."

I personally believe that. I believe that this extension, providing \$3,500 per student, will have a very substantial impact on enrolment. Enrolment in our private and religious schools has been going up quite substantially in the last five years, I think for understandable reasons. In my opinion, the government has dramatically undermined public confidence in public education, and so the public has decided, in an unfortunate number of instances, to go to private schools. The government has said, "We are now going to accelerate that." There can be no other result than an acceleration of the move out of our public schools and into private schools.

I met with the leadership of the Jewish community. For them this is a huge issue, and I understand that. I said, "Here's my concern. I represent an area in Scarborough. I've lived there for 35 years. It has undergone an enormous change over those 35 years, and it's undergone that change with an enormous amount of goodwill. Our schools now are multilingual, they are multireligious and they represent students who have come from literally around the world.

I use a school in my area as a metaphor for myself; it's a school called L'Amoreaux Collegiate. Around the meeting hall in L'Amoreaux Collegiate there are flags from I think 81 countries, representing the place of birth of the students in that school. That is a school that's symbolic of what the other schools have done. They have been able to bring young people together from, believe me, many faiths, many backgrounds, and with goodwill we have seen this change. I don't like the term "visible," but probably the community I represent has gone from 85% white to probably 80% visible, and it's gone through that change with enormous goodwill.

One of the key reasons is our schools—there's no doubt in my mind—particularly I might say our secondary schools, because it is the young people who in my belief should be together, and they are in those schools. I have no doubt that if this policy proceeds there will be a substantial increase in the establishment of new religious schools and the expansion of others.

I realize many people in my community may be supportive of that, but it tears at another fundamentally important thing to me, and that is a school where our students come together. That's why I nodded in agreement when I saw Ms Ecker's letter several months ago. I truly believe that. In my community, in my opinion, if this goes ahead, there will be a substantial number of new religious schools start up and there will be a fragmentation. The Conservatives may very well get a lot of votes among those people—and so be it—but it will fundamentally change.

I would just say that the government of Ontario just recently published its projections of population over the next 10 years and the next 25 years. They have published a variety of different estimates. The least indicated that 80% of our population growth will come through immigration, and it goes up to 90% on different assumptions. A million people every decade will come to Ontario from other countries, and here we are about to tear apart the fabric of one of the essential elements that have made this province and this country work.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** The sky is falling.

**Mr Phillips:** The member for Kitchener may want to listen to this a bit, because I think it's going to fundamentally change our education system.

When the leadership of the Jewish community came in to see me, they said the reason they believe in this is because it's a matter of religious discrimination. That's a very challenging argument, particularly from the Jewish community, which has suffered from discrimination for 3,000 years. But I therefore believe that you can't stop half-way. If you say that we are moving down this road because there has been religious discrimination, you can't discriminate half-way; you have to say the inevitable, final point in this road is full funding for these schools. They've indicated that, and I understand that. That is their core belief, that there has been religious discrimination and therefore there should be full funding for the religious schools.

At that point, we have a totally fragmented system. The government has said they estimate the cost of this to be \$300 million. That's the cost assuming that the enrolment in private schools stays exactly as it was last year, doesn't increase at all. Well, we know two things: we know that it has been increasing quite substantially, and we know that with at least \$300 million being spent on it there will be a further expansion. So the first wave will be over the next few years, a very substantial increase in enrolment in these schools and away from our public schools. The second thing will be, without doubt, pressure for full funding, and it will be relentless and completely understandable.

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So I say, as we step off down this road, there is an inevitability to the road we're going down. It isn't this proposal—this is the first step. Every single community that has spoken in favour of it has said, "This is a good first step." I think we should be looking at this as leading to full funding for private schools and for private

religious schools. In my opinion, that will tear apart our public schools. I dare say that many of our challenging students will be left in our public schools.

The symbol I love in the communities I represent is those children from diverse backgrounds heading together, and the symbol and the vision I now see is that they're heading apart. The faith community will say, "That's what we want," but for me it fundamentally changes the province of Ontario. You don't have to accept my language. I would say you can go back to the language Ms Ecker used just a few months ago when there was some thought that the United Nations might influence Ontario to have to change its policy. She spelled out clearly what I believe, and I'd just like to re-read it again: "Extending funding to religious private schools would result in fragmentation of the education system in Ontario and undermine the goal of universal access. We trust that the government of Ontario's position as outlined in this letter is clear."

If you choose to accept my belief and that of the Liberal caucus that this is a major step down an inevitable road, surely we should have legitimate debate. Surely the public of Ontario, who have embraced public education for decades and decades, should have a say in this step.

I see it being not a force that will pull communities together; in the area I represent, it will be something that will divide. I go back: I recognize that the future of Canada will continue to rely on immigration. We are the country in the world that relies the most on immigration. The bulk of it, as we all know, comes to Ontario—I represent a riding in the Toronto area—and the majority of that comes to Toronto. This move will have a profound impact on education.

It was instructive when we asked the ministry staff what studies had been done on this, what's going to happen to the enrolment, and the answer was, "We've checked the Internet, looked at what was on the Internet, and we estimate it will have no impact on the enrolment. Furthermore, the costing that's been done suggests that not only will there be no increase in the enrolment but it will freeze the enrolment." If that's the depth of analysis that's been done, surely now is the time to pause, before we step off this major step.

I call it a voucher system, because in my opinion it is a voucher system. You submit your bill and you get a cheque back for \$3,500; and as I say, that's just a step.

Having said all that, I can understand the depth of feeling in the communities that want to send their young people to religious schools, and I understand the emotion this will cause, but there is an argument on the other side, where I am, and that is that the damage that will be done by this to the province of Ontario is enormous and tears apart one of the absolute fundamentals.

On to other parts of the legislation. I will just comment briefly on the personal income tax cut, to say that—I say it with a bit of a smile—two years ago the government said, "We're going to cut personal income tax rates the equivalent of 20% and that will result in a

\$4-billion cut in taxes." Well, they didn't do it. The cuts in rates represent about \$3 billion. I don't fault them for that, because I think they're starting to run into financial problems, they're starting to run into difficulties in making sure there's revenue. So I didn't fault them on breaking the promise, but they did break the promise. They said that they would implement it all this budget year, and they've phased it over the next two years. I'm not faulting them for breaking the promise. I think it was wise to break the promise, and so I almost salute them for doing that, but the Conservatives may not want to let everybody back in their own ridings know that they did that.

I want to talk about the corporate tax cut because this is, in my opinion, a substantial mistake on the tax front. What this essentially does is commit Ontario to corporate tax rates 25% lower than the US. I say that is a foolish long-term way for us to have a strong economy.

Virtually every single business person I talked to, and certainly the government's documents that they put out on why you should do business in Ontario, say, "You should come to Ontario because we will have competitive tax rates, but we will give you, we will assure you, that you will have an education system here second to none; a well-trained workforce second to none; a universally accessible health care system that is publicly funded, that will save employers substantial amounts of money; and a quality of life here that is second to none." This is the way that jurisdictions build long-term economic strength, a long-term economic plan and a viable, sustainable economy.

I've been watching television recently and watching the ads for the state of Pennsylvania. They come on and say, "Where can you find 5,000 engineers and 4,500 technologists and the best educated workforce? Come to Pennsylvania." It's all about the quality of their education system. And here we are embarking on a tax policy that says, "Come to Ontario because you're going to find your corporate taxes 25% lower than you'd have in Michigan or New York state or Pennsylvania."

There are two problems with that. One is, how do we then fund the very things that the government says are the reasons you should locate in Ontario? "Ontario workers are well educated and well trained. Sixty per cent of the 1998 workforce have attended university or college; 20% graduated from university; 30% earned diplomas...." It goes on to say, "Nearly half of all Canadians in the 25 to 64 age group are university and college grads, by far the highest proportion in the OECD." "Canada spent 7% of its gross domestic product on education in 1995." "Ontario's highly accessible system of 25 community colleges of applied arts and technology has developed a substantial reputation."

It goes on. This is important. It says, "US manufacturers pay, on average, more than \$3,100 per employee for the kind of health care coverage provided by Canada's publicly supported system, whereas Ontario employers pay about \$540." In other words, there's about a \$2,500 cost advantage. But this legislation commits

Ontario to corporate taxes 25% lower than the US. In my opinion, it's a policy mistake. We should be saying, "Come to Ontario. We will guarantee you competitive taxes." In fact, the member for Peterborough used that term. Competitive taxes? This is not competitive taxes. We've now decided we're going to be 25% lower. Believe me, when you get into a match with a US state on this basis, we are not going to be able to compete long-term with that. They will keep forcing our taxes down and down and down.

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How do we then afford those things the government says: a universally accessible health care system, an affordable education system? I think in here they talk about tuition fees being substantially lower in Canada than they are in the US. Well, we have two choices: we cut services below where they are in the US, or we decide we're going to fund them from different sources. It would appear that what's going to happen is that the government will move to sourcing these things more and more from consumption taxes. That will be the way in which we will inevitably move in the province of Ontario: away from corporate income taxes and on to consumption taxes. I say, how are we going to be able in the future to fund the essential things that have been the reason corporations have chosen to locate in Ontario?

In my opinion, this particular tax policy is wrong. Frankly, I've been urging for some time that this be looked at by our legislative committee. For a tax policy to be long-term 25% below the US, we are dooming ourselves to defeat on the economic front.

I am convinced that the way we will build our economy is by saying to companies, "Expand in Ontario, come to Ontario, grow in Ontario, because we will continue to have a first-class quality education system"—in my opinion, we're heading dramatically in the wrong direction with this voucher system, moving away from our public system, taking at least \$500 million out of our public system. Secondly, in terms of our post-secondary, the budget provides funding for our universities and colleges \$300 million lower than when Premier Harris became Premier. We're the only jurisdiction in North America that has done that. Every single US state and every single province has increased support for post-secondary education. We're the only jurisdiction that has cut public support for post-secondary education. If you talk to the business community, they will tell you, as they tell us, that that is a true, major long-term investment. In this budget, if you look at it, the amount provided for post-secondary education in the upcoming school year is \$300 million less than when Premier Harris became Premier.

Even, I might add, on the elementary and secondary, the minister talks about extra funding for elementary and secondary. I think the provincial support for education is up, but not by even as much as—they say they have provided increased funding to replace cuts in education property tax and to provide for the principal and interest

on new schools. It isn't even up that much. So in elementary and secondary we are not investing.

Several of the members who spoke earlier talked about the need for infrastructure investment. This budget has the lowest level of investment in capital going back 20 years. In Ontario, we have never spent less than \$2 billion on our capital budget, the investment in our infrastructure. This budget, for the first time in 20 years, provides less than \$2 billion in capital. There it is: \$1.944 billion, the first time Ontario has been under \$2 billion in capital investment in at least 20 years.

When we think about a long-term economic strategy for Ontario, how will we have a long-term sustainable economy, with quality jobs and competitive with the US? We're blessed. We now are the most export-oriented jurisdiction in the world. Nobody relies on exports like Ontario does. Exports are now the equivalent of 55% of our gross domestic product, 93% to the US.

We can compete with the US, but it is not by offering corporate taxes 25% lower than the US; it is by doing the things that the government's own document said: investing in our post-secondary education, ensuring that all of our talent has an opportunity to get a post-secondary education; making sure that our publicly funded elementary and secondary education gives all of our young people an opportunity; and certainly, investing in our health care and making sure we have our publicly funded, universally accessible health care system.

This document points out that it saves every single employer \$2,500 per employee for health care. That doesn't happen out of the air. It happens because we, as a province, have chosen for many years, under various governments, to invest in those things. For the first time we have decided that we're going to compete by having corporate taxes 25% lower. I think that's a losing long-term strategy.

We decided we're going to compete by investing \$300 million less in post-secondary education than we did six years ago. We decided we're going to compete by investing less in infrastructure than we've done in at least the last 20 years. I smiled when one of the Conservative members earlier talked about the SuperBuild Millennium Partnerships fund. That's the \$1-billion fund. The government announced the \$1-billion fund last year. They said, "This is a high priority for us and we're going to spend \$1 billion on this SuperBuild Millennium Partnerships fund." Last year they said they're going to start it off with \$200 million for all these important projects.

Guess what? At the end of the year, they'd spent \$4 million. They budgeted \$200 million and spent \$4 million. No one advocates, because you have the money budgeted, going out and spending it, but I assumed that when they trumpeted this SuperBuild Millennium Partnerships fund last year, they had an idea that this was a good idea and they budgeted \$200 million because they had an idea that that's what is required. Well, nothing happened. One of the members just a few minutes ago talked about this SuperBuild Millennium Partnerships

fund as a big deal. This year they've budgeted \$100 million and they may spend \$2 million.

My point is this: if we want a long-term, sustainable, strong economy in Ontario, we will not get it by saying, "Come to Ontario because corporate taxes are 25% lower." Arkansas will beat us every day of the week on that one. It's, "Come to Ontario because we have competitive taxes. We will compete with anybody on taxes. Come here because of the quality of our education system, the quality of our health care system, the quality of our post-secondary education, the quality of life in the province of Ontario."

My regret is that this budget bill, as I say, amends 22 different acts, and it contains this huge impact on public education. I do not for a moment underestimate the importance of that. To those who say, "It's just a little something for some groups out there that deserve it," I say it is a significant move. It will dramatically impact our public education system. In the short term it will represent a substantial loss in students out of our public system. In the long term, if the groups say, "The reason we got the funding in the first place was because of discrimination. We're only getting half the funding the other schools are. You're still discriminating," it's a difficult argument to argue against. We're heading down that road, in my opinion, to full funding, and that will fundamentally change the province of Ontario.

Here we are, after we've been able to prove that the things we've invested in for the last 20 years—because you don't invest in a young person for two years; it's a 20-year investment—have paid off. Our businesses in Ontario have been able to compete with the US. We are now, as I say, the most export-oriented jurisdiction. We have been successful in all those things, and here we are deciding that we're going to fundamentally undermine the very things that have got us to where we are.

## 2030

Perhaps nothing could be more stark than the way we're going to compete in the future is with 25% lower taxes. That's why you should be in Ontario—that's not a winning strategy. What we're going to do to our public education system is encourage a substantial number of young people to move out of our public education system, which has been the cornerstone, in my opinion, of much of our success.

For those reasons, we obviously have some grave concerns about the direction of this budget bill.

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** Before I move to my comments on an individual basis, I want to compliment the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, who always provides us with rational and very sound arguments for or against an issue when given. He took the time to analyze the circumstances and took a good hard look at the budget and offered us some observations that we should be heeding very clearly and making sure that when we do make comments they're based on the information. He took his information right out of the budget, so I trust what he is saying and I thank him for that.

Members on the other side, when entering into this debate, were talking about—of course, the first round of words that come out of their mouths—the tax cuts. What I want to put on the record for you today is that I've been doing a little bit of homework on this issue. I took a look at the total number of tax cuts the members on the other side keep referring to and I will, for the record, finally tell you that I've been taking this record and that is the number of user fees that have been inflicted on the people of Ontario as a result of some of the trade-offs. In a comparison, for the tax cuts that the members on the other side so proudly display—at one time it was 65 or 66 tax cuts and with this budget it's going to be up into around 110, I believe they're going to start telling us. We are now in the field of accepting in the province of Ontario over 327 user fees since this government has come into power—

### *Interjection.*

**Mr Levac:** That's right. It's unbelievable to talk about that. And who is receiving these user fees? Let's talk about these user fees, the user fees that this government is responsible for in a downloading sense between the provincial government and the municipal governments. Unfortunately, because of the tricky downloading that happened to them, our senior citizens have been hit with user fees, people on ODSP have been hit with user fees, people who require medical services in this province are now being hit with user fees and school boards and school trustees and schools themselves on an individual basis are now getting hit with user fees.

This is an amazing revelation, if people care to keep track. I'll guarantee to you that as this government continues its threshold and its acceptance for the continual downloading of this tax cut issue, we are going to see even more and more and more user fees for the people of the province of Ontario. At one time, the government boasted and stood up proudly and said, "Our senior citizens don't mind paying extra money for their medical uses. They like to pay extra money for the drugs they need." As a matter of fact, what we're finding out now—and I know the members on this side have heard the horror stories—is that some of them are choosing between paying the dispensing fees and all those extra fees they're being charged and not taking their medication because they can't afford it. How unfortunate that this debate had to evolve around user fees versus this glorious tax cut regime this government has been talking about for such a long time.

As well, we hear about the technical issues around Bill 45. I want to make mention of these for the record as well. We did do our homework and we found some avenues they went down in this particular budget where they needed to do some cleaning up. But unfortunately, we're going to have to talk about the ones that didn't do the job. Bill 45 is called the Responsible Choices for Growth and Accountability Act, 2001. It's actually the 2001 budget. It includes a number of technical amendments, and those are the Business Corporations Act—and I am absolutely sure that the lawyers, doctors and

accountants who are now permitted to practise through a professional corporation will not be able to avoid liability for professional negligence through corporations. It's the Co-operative Corporations Act. These are 13 amendments that are intended to streamline the regulatory requirements for co-ops. These amendments include removing the requirement that co-ops have a corporate seal, removing the \$100 ceiling on a par value of shares and adding provisions for jointly held memberships. I guess the expression is that the devil will be in the detail, because I'm sure we're going to hear from these people once they realize that maybe some of these amendments are going to affect not their ability to perform their jobs properly, but the ease in which they may not have to comply with regulations that once existed.

The Health Insurance Act, the Law Society Act, the related Health Professions Act, the Social Work and Social Service Work Act and the Veterinarians Act: we'll be waiting with bated breath to see how these people are affected and whether they'll come forward to indicate whether or not the government's on the right track.

I'd like to quote an editorial from a famous Toronto newspaper:

"Latter-day Tory rhetoric about [tax credits] being a further extension of school 'choice' is absurd. No one is denying parents the 'choice' of putting their children into private schools. But what the Harris Tories are now saying (although they used to say the opposite) is that parents who choose to do this have the right to the funding by the state. Why?

"This government has plenty of work to do in fixing the public education system—which must accept every child, unlike any other system, and is the glue that holds a multicultural society together. We say this as supporters of many Tory education reforms, in areas such as toughening the curriculum, enforcing academic standards and demanding accountability from teachers. But these are all big enough tasks without opening up a new ideological war over tax credits.

"Finally, that the Tories plan to allow such a precedent-setting move to proceed as part of an omnibus budget bill—without separate public hearings and a separate bill—is arrogant. Then again, the whole idea is wrong, the rationale is wrong and the implementation is wrong. Apparently, Tories who do not learn from the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them."

What paper? The Toronto Sun, obviously a Liberal-leaning newspaper.

I will proceed. Let's use the words of somebody who's respected on that side.

"As our provincial Minister of Education has made clear, our government is committed to preserving and improving our public education system by upholding our constitutional obligation to fully fund public and separate schools. Complying with the UN's demand as the federal Liberal government would have us do would remove from our existing public education system at least \$300 million per year and with some estimates as high as \$700 million. Obviously such action would run directly

counter to Ontario's long-standing commitment to public education."

Guess who said it? Michael Harris, Premier of Ontario. I found another letter.

"We believe that our commitment and resources must continue to focus on preserving and improving the quality of our publicly funded system. While the government of Ontario recognizes the right of parents to choose alternative forms of education for their children, it continues to have no plans to provide funding to private religious schools or to parents of children that attend such schools. As was set out in the submission to the UNHRC, extending funding to religious private schools would result in fragmentation of the education system in Ontario and undermine the goal of universal access to education."

Who said this? Janet Ecker, Minister of Education. Interesting.

I want to provide another piece of written literature from a constituent:

"On behalf of all concerned citizens in Ontario, I strongly urge that you persuade other members of your party to demand that the Conservative Party hold public hearings into the tax credit for private schools using public money. I ask that you demand that it be removed from ... Bill 45 and not decide the fate of education in this province in terms of money, but rather on sound ideology and on the history of public education which has served its people very well over the decades since it came into being.

"Even the Premier and the Minister of Education have been opposed to these credits" in the past. To quote the Globe and Mail ..., Premier Harris 'predicted that extending government aid to private religious schools would remove from our existing public system at least \$300 million per year, with some estimates as high as \$700 million.' You continued by saying, 'Obviously such an action would run directly counter to Ontario's long-standing commitment to public education.'"

#### 2040

There are questions this constituent wants to ask, and here are some of them that I believe this government is failing to even allow us, through public consultations, to answer. So I'm going to try to put these on the record for my constituent:

"What numbers of students have been forecast to switch from the public to the private system in five years? in 10 years?

"What impact will this have on the amount of funding for the public system over these particular time periods?"

How much and "what amount of funding will be lost?

"What checks are there in place to make sure that all schools, private and public, are teaching a common curriculum in all grades and students graduating from these schools, either at the elementary or secondary levels, will have received the same level and quality of teaching of these curricula? In other words, will there be ministry superintendents that visit and keep in constant contact with all schools ensuring that what is being demanded by

the government, through the Ministry of Education, is being followed?

"In what ways will the rather lax method of applying for a private school change? It seems that anyone can obtain the right to set up a private school (ie, \$250 with application, some background checks etc)" and bingo, bango, you've got a private school.

"What will the government do with the money that is not credited to the parent of a child now in the private system? If it takes approximately \$6,900 to educate a student per year in the public system and if you credit the parent who has moved their child to the private system to the maximum of \$3,500, what will happen to the remaining \$3,400?" A rather interesting challenge for the government to answer.

"My list of questions could go on and on."

My constituent hopes that the opposition continues to ask the pertinent questions of the Conservatives so that they demand the answers before they implement such a plan.

"I ask that you pay attention to the rights of all citizens under any government and demand that public hearings be set up immediately to discuss this issue so that all of us can make informed decisions."

When I phoned her and asked her if she would also agree to the fact that maybe we could remove this section from the bill and have it debated as a private bill, she enthusiastically said, "Absolutely. I think it's the most just and democratic thing to do."

These are coming from all different sides. I want to make sure, unlike what's been happening on the other side, that I acknowledge that I have received some e-mails and some regular mail from constituents who are happy that they're getting the tax credit. I want to assure them that I am there to listen to their concerns. I have indicated to them that I have supported and I will continue to support public education.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr Levac:** Unlike what some of the members on the other side are heckling about, indicating that we're trying to ignore them altogether, the fact is that they have ignored public education altogether. The fact is that \$350 million, up to \$700 million, of public money will be taken away. That means that \$700 million has not been invested into the public education system. So it far out-cries the fact that we will listen to their concerns.

As has been indicated before by our leader and by the Liberal Party, we believe there's a fairness issue involved here, but our first and foremost crisis that we have to fight—it's a crusade we're on now—is to make sure that the public system gets back to where it should be, unlike the disaster that's been happening for the last six years.

**Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** Put the \$2 billion back in.

**Mr Levac:** Yes, we need to put back in again the \$2 billion that was taken out.

Slowly but surely—I want to make this point very clear. In 1995, when this government first was elected, \$800 million was taken out by a government that decided

at that time, under the social contract, that they would remove it, with the intent of putting it back in again once the fiscal house was in order. At that time, immediately upon getting elected, this government decided to immediately freeze that and say, "It's gone forever." So we've got \$800 million that was removed altogether in 1995.

Then what happened was that we found out, through a little bit of detective work, that one of the minister's staff was going to be paid a big, big bonus—hundreds of thousands of dollars—to take out another \$400 million. That caused a very large uproar and all of a sudden we lost \$1.6 billion from our education system. From that point on, we've been trying to recover, and today we still have yet to do that.

We ask this question of the public: what about your libraries? What about your librarians? What about your music programs? What about your English-as-a-second-language programs? What about your arts programs? What about your phys ed programs? And I would like to ask this question with a very high emphasis on this point: what about your special education programs in your schools?

The fact remains that the government has been able to say they've been putting a little bit more money in. I've alluded to this many, many times in this House and I will allude to it outside the House. Because I was in education, I, as a principal, had to go through the process that the government created, the ISA grant. What happened was that they raised the bar and made it almost impossible for anybody who was receiving educational assistance at that time; those students who were receiving that special help didn't qualify to get that help any more the following year when this government found out that they couldn't afford it because they couldn't keep putting money in, so they had to keep cutting.

Under the guise of putting more money into the special education silo, they didn't tell anybody that it was out of the ISA grants and over to the SEPPA grants, but once the SEPPA grants were applied for, you didn't have the student to get the equipment for it. So, quite frankly, they didn't spend the money. It was a really neat trick, how they tried to tell everybody they'd put more money into special education.

I want to refer to a special circumstance in my riding. The Grand Erie District School Board, after amalgamating, received people from the county and from the city. We had an urban and rural mix. We had one of those school boards that had that unenviable position of trying to balance off what was going on between the urban and rural situations.

We have a school in our riding, BCI, which celebrated 90 years of education. We've had people with great potential graduate from there. We had inventors—the electron microscope—former Premiers, Olympians. By the say, in that school, guess what? They have to seriously consider closing it down. A \$25-million retrofit is necessary. If they close the school, the two schools that would feed it would be overflowing. If they don't close the school, they can't afford it because there's no money

in the grant because they're going to have to close other schools in the counties.

**Mr McMeekin:** Why don't we invest in it, then?

**Mr Levac:** Why don't we invest in that school? I challenge the government to come up with the money for BCI and make it survive another 90 years.

Speaker, I've got too much more to say, but I have to relinquish my time. I appreciate that offer.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton):** I'm pleased to rise to speak on the budget of 2001 and this bill that's before us.

First of all, I want to clarify. At the very beginning of the last budget that was brought down in the House by Minister Eves, it stated that the budget is the foundation that shapes societal and economic direction. The fact that it shapes societal direction is very indicative of what is happening, particularly with the budget aspect of the bill that is talking about education.

The words "responsible choices" are, in my view, an oxymoron when we consider the agenda that Mike Harris has had, because it was anything but responsible. The choices being made in this budget are radical, extreme choices. You can see lots of evidence of very poor management and less accountability. It's a reactionary policy rather than one with a long-term vision.

If we want to talk about a long-term vision, one of the emphases about sustainable economic development is our education. That's our primary, secondary and post-secondary education. If we're not able to invest in that base in our society, we fail society.

You can have tax cuts. That's part of the equation. The other part of the equation is a well-educated and a highly skilled society. That is our competitive edge. It isn't the race to the bottom only, because inevitably we'll always find another jurisdiction which is going to be able to beat us at the lowest taxes. You can try to compete if you want against Mexico on that level, or you can compete against other developing countries. I don't think that's what we want in Ontario. In Ontario we want a quality of life that's developed through competitiveness based on a well-educated, highly skilled society. All they want is to cut taxes. Quality of life doesn't enter into the equation, it appears.

**2050**

Whether you're talking about good management or good government, each should make an evaluation at the end of each fiscal year and you should ask, "Do we meet the needs of the people we serve, and is the money being spent effectively?" When you don't provide funding for the textbooks for students for next year, you cut it in half, when the students are the same number as the year before and they all need new textbooks, when you are not doing that, it's very poor management because you're not meeting the needs of the students.

Is money being spent effectively? Well, when I decided to take a look at if money was being spent effectively, I decided to take a look at how Mike Harris was controlling his own costs in cabinet. I decided to see if govern-

ment cabinet offices were also being held to the same standard as all the other ministries: the environment ministry, for example, the money that has been cut out of education. I can go on and on to all the other sectors. What did I find? I found that the cabinet offices had more than doubled.

You talk about a balanced budget as if that is be-all, end-all. That is such simplistic thinking that it indicates to me exactly that the point is that the government bases its policy on totally simplistic equations. For example, when we talk about this tax credit for education, do they have any evidence—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. Excuse me. The member for Oxford will find his seat or will find a place out of here.

**Ms Di Cocco:** The government ran on a platform in 1999. Nowhere in that platform was there a paradigm shift of its education policy. They're attempting to put this education policy in the budget document without any consultation, without any public hearings. As a matter of fact, they're not even, because of its long-term impact, taking it out of the budget and debating it on its own merit. I think they underestimate the intelligence of the people in this province. They believe that if they do it quickly and in this manner, without public consultation, they're going to be able to get away with it.

Long term, I believe this tax credit and the intent of the tax credit is going to undermine the very fabric of who we are as a society in Ontario. One of the things the government has done, and they have a great track record on this, is consistently talk about efficiencies without understanding what it is to be effective. You can be very efficient and totally ineffective, and I will show you how, OK? You have cut the ministry staff at the Ministry of the Environment. I'm going to speak to a submission that was made at the Walkerton inquiry, and this tells you exactly how cutting costs has rendered a department dysfunctional.

*Interjections.*

**Ms Di Cocco:** The level of rudeness tends to be quite high in this chamber with some of the members.

First of all, the Ministry of the Environment has been cut. As I said, I'll read this from the document that was presented at Walkerton. It says, "Ministry staff described the challenges they face each day. They illustrated the weaknesses, and among many other examples, described how staffing cuts have limited the capacity to protect the environment. This means that they have been rendered ineffective. They also described how the ministry squanders resources on avoidable crises because it will not develop preventive, proactive programs."

It also says, "How stripped of resources is the ministry? Examples raised at every workshop included 25-year-old lab equipment, poorly equipped field inspectors, teams that have to rent a truck before they can get to the site of a spill. More fundamentally, members described the loss of human resources such as scientific experts. Experienced staff retire without ministry plans to transfer

their knowledge to other staff or to hire new experts. Ministry of the Environment staff want the Ontario public to know that the ministry has been cut past the point where staff can effectively protect the environment. They work hard every day, but every day they know they don't have the resources they need."

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound):** Who told you that?

**Ms Di Cocco:** What I'm trying to say, for the government members who don't understand the concept, is that you can be efficient, but you are not—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound knows that the member for Sarnia-Lambton has the floor. Happy now?

**Ms Di Cocco:** Thank you, Speaker. Another aspect that troubles me and alarms me is the fact—I see the Mike Harris agenda as a train that's out of control; this is another issue of accountability—that private schools don't have to hire certified teachers, don't have to follow the provincial curriculum. In other words, this is a government that uses the word "accountability" over and over, but whose zeal is to put public funds into private service providers. That's what it's doing.

The Provincial Auditor commented on this. At present, \$30 billion, public dollars, is put into outsourcing of our services. It's going to private service providers. What does that mean? It means public funds are paying for these services. It isn't private in the sense that the private sector is putting money into it. Public funds are paying for it. What does the Provincial Auditor say about this type of accountability? His report says, "About half of the province's annual expenditures, approximately \$30 billion, are spent by the government as transfer payments to government service delivery agents. The Audit Act ... does not permit my office to access on a discretionary basis all the information necessary to report to the Legislature the extent to which these agents achieve intended results and whether or not taxpayers are receiving value for money spent."

Nothing has changed in that regard with this government. It hasn't provided more accountability in the system. It just keeps using a bigger hammer. I have to say what I've found incredibly disturbing is that the government believes it doesn't need to justify its changes in policy direction.

One of its past members, David Boushy—he was in my riding—said, "The provincial government practises tough policies." He also says, "They don't spend much time explaining the need and rationale for such policies between elections." That says it all. They bring in a major piece of legislation that's going to change the way we deal with our education system in this province, and what happens? They put it in a budget bill, a budget bill that's probably going to be passed in very short order. No public hearings. The public hasn't had a chance even to digest the magnitude of what you are doing.

You yourselves have been on record as opposed to this kind of policy over and over. I know there have got to be

some rational members across the floor there, and I don't know why you can't give some critical thought to the damage that you are actually doing to our vision in this province.

**2100**

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I want to say, because I have a short—oh, my two minutes, are they coming up? It doesn't matter.

The member for Brant spoke; the members for Scarborough-Agincourt and Sarnia-Lambton. I've got to say that I happen to agree with almost everything they said. This is where it becomes problematic, because often the public watching says, "Hmmm, they sound very much like New Democrats." Right? So how do you sort all this out?

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** I think the member from Sarnia-Lambton said, "Oh, I don't know about that." But it's true. We sound the same often enough, and it's scary.

The member for Scarborough-Agincourt says that he is against the tax cut, and for good reason. He argues, similarly to New Democrats, that it's a bad thing. I do too. In fact, I'm one of the few New Democrats who say tax cuts have been devastating and wrong. I argued against the federal government doing it, provincial governments doing it, because I think it's wrong.

I know the Tories love this stuff, but it's taking \$10 billion to \$12 billion out of the economy. I've got to say, who is happy out there with all the cuts they have made to education, our health care system, our social services, our environment, labour, culture? Who is happy with this government out there? Well, I know there are a number of people who are happy. I'm saying they haven't seen the benefits of your wonderful tax cuts.

To the Liberals, I've got to tell you, New Democrats at least had argued in the 1999 election that tax cuts are bad. We, as New Democrats, were prepared to take off the top 10% of the people who earn a whole lot of money, a whole lot of cash here that they don't need. We said, as New Democrats, they would be taken off. If you're earning over 80,000 bucks, taxable, you're earning a pretty buck. We said they would go, and we were hoping the Liberals would join us in that regard.

My question to you is, where are you going to find the money to put back in education if you don't take the money out of the tax cuts? What are you going to do?

**Mr O'Toole:** It's always a pleasure to respond and actually shed some light on Bill 45, which we're debating tonight. I do respect the member from Scarborough-Agincourt, and I did listen respectfully to the members from Brant and Sarnia-Lambton.

I think for the viewer tonight it's important, although it is late—you haven't been getting much substance within the bill. This bill here is An Act to implement measures contained in the 2001 Budget and to amend various statutes. So there have been measures with respect to expenditures as well as expenditure changes.

There are actually 22 sections in the bill that are amending statutes like the Business Corporations Act, the

Capital Investment Plan Act, Co-operative Corporations Act, Corporations Tax Act, Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act, Health Insurance Act, Income Tax Act, Insurance Act, Law Society Act, Loan and Trust Corporations Act, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act, Mortgage Brokers Act, Municipal Act, Ontario Property Assessment Corporation Act, Public Accountancy Act, Real Estate Brokers Act, Regulation of Health Professions Act, Social Services Act, Work Act, Succession Duty Act, Supplementary Provisions Act, Tobacco Act, and Veterinarians Act.

I think what I'm hearing tonight are the sort of canned messages that they've all been given to read dutifully, and, I might comment, they've read them fairly well. But as far as actually reading the 22 different sections here, I'm surprised, and certainly I know we'll likely hear from the member for Trinity-Spadina—

**Mr Marchese:** I'm coming, John.

**Mr O'Toole:** I am waiting for it, because he's a very entertaining speaker and he'll probably be a lot more lucid in terms of touching on some of these different bills, besides the simple education debate.

There are those on the other side who are opposed to giving hard-working families an education tax credit. We understand that. There are differences within your own caucus, but I am waiting for—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** My congratulations to the members for Scarborough-Agincourt, Brant and Sarnia-Lambton for bringing out the best of what is not in the last budget.

With the recent budget, I guess both the Minister of Finance and the Premier wanted to be like baseball players; they want to steal second base while still holding a foot on first base. You just cannot do that. What they have done is to keep the peace with the Bay Street people, with big businesses and industries, giving away \$2.2 billion.

**Mr Marchese:** What about Caroline?

**Mr Sergio:** What about Caroline? I'm sorry. I said Sarnia-Lambton. That's the member for Sarnia-Lambton. By name, that's Caroline Di Cocco.

So that is \$2.2 billion which this budget does not give to the rest of the people in Ontario.

I think it's shameful for this government that they are going to such a huge extent to keep the large businesses afloat, if you will, because \$2.2 billion is a lot of money. But when you consider the inequity that exists with this particular government when it comes to injured workers in Ontario, it is just appalling. In 1998-99, they received some 0.25% increase. Can you believe it? And in the year 2000, they will be receiving some 0.5% increase, if the previous year's inflation rate exceeded 3%. Where's the fairness of this government? This is an area they should have tackled with the last budget, and they failed miserably. They failed the people of Ontario.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** I also want to congratulate the members for Scarborough-Agincourt, Brant and Sarnia-Lambton for

their extremely cogent and very helpful remarks. I think the government would do well to be listening to the member for Scarborough-Agincourt in terms of his advice, and certainly my colleagues have spoken about the fact of the corporate tax cut of \$2.2 billion. Nobody argues with the fact that we need to be competitive. I think it was mentioned by the members from the government side that we need to be competitive. But to bring the tax rates 25% below what the rates are in the States is a dangerous game that can ultimately end in a race to the bottom, and I think that's something they need to be concerned with.

I was also particularly taken by the comments by the member for Brant when he was explaining to the House and reminding the people of the province that indeed while this government brags about all their tax cuts and the number of tax cuts they've put in place, the way they've dealt with a great deal of this is by stealth and kind of sneaking it in through the inclusion of user fees on the system. How many?

**Mr Levac:** Some 397.

**Mr Gravelle:** Some 397 user fees have been put in place since this government came into power. They don't talk about those very much. You never hear in the speeches over there about the user fees.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Gravelle:** Well, you don't, and you should. They really are just another form of taxation. I can tell you, as a northerner, we're pretty upset about the vehicle registration fee being re-imposed on northerners, something that was taken off and should have been taken off because of the difference in gas prices. You should know about that. The member for Durham knows all about that one.

The point is, there are all these user fees—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Gravelle:** Well, you do. You were up in Thunder Bay; we were glad you heard us. But those are concerns that we have. Those are all lessons that need to be learned, and it's important that the people of Ontario understand, recall, realize that user fees have been a great counterbalance to tax cuts anyway.

The fact is there are so many other issues. The whole tax credit for private education, independent schools, is one that should certainly be taken out of this particular budget. The least this government should be doing is giving the people of this province an opportunity to consult with them in a real way through a legislative committee. We demand that that happen. We asked for it today; they said no. We still demand—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Response?

**Ms Di Cocco:** I have to say that I don't think the government gets it. I really don't think the Harris government gets it.

I'll say it one more time: sustainable economic development is more than just tax cuts. That's a part of it, but it's more than that. It's called people development and people development is where it's at globally except for the Ontario government. They don't understand that

people development is where the future is. It's innovation, it's creativity, it's the human capital. The human capital is what a good economic base is all about. This budget does nothing to do that. All it does is fragment our education system more. It doesn't develop it.

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Ninety six per cent of the student population go to publicly funded schools. Those schools have been consistently eroded, they have been beaten up, they have been demoralized. Is that the way to build our human capital in this province?

Our universities are facing deficits. They have to ration the work they're doing. Do you know what? These people don't work with evidence. These people don't work with critical thought. It's like this very extreme ideology that says, "We cut taxes. It's going to solve all the problems."

The human capital is where it's at. Sustainable development is about people development and not just for businesses.

**Mr Marchese:** I am happy to speak to Bill 45. I'm happy to welcome the Ontario citizens to this public debate, this Ontario public political forum. It's 9:12. We've got 20 minutes left and then you can go back to your regular lives. This is a good program. It's the only opportunity most people get to be consulted. The only consultation people get is this political program because the government doesn't consult any more, because, you see, "Democracy is such a waste of time," right? You got elected in 1999 and you can do what you want. Democracy happens every four or five years. There is no consultation any more. The only consultation you get, good public listeners, both taxpayers and citizens alike, is this debate.

I know you've got to sit through a whole lot of boring speeches. I know that. It's not my fault. But I've got to say to you, I'm participating and I know you're participating with me as we debate these issues. You know, good citizens and good taxpayers—because there are a lot of good taxpayers out there and a whole lot of good citizens—that I have excoriated this government on the tax cuts and have flagellated these people from one end of the room to the other, but they don't listen, they just don't listen. They say, "Oh, tax cuts, are you kidding? Look at all the jobs we have created with this tax cut. All these young people, middle-aged people, women, men—jobs galore because of the tax cut."

They are very hush about the American economy. You don't know how they quake in their little boots at the notion that this poor American economy could somehow dwindle a little bit and fade away. I've got to tell you, they're really worried, these Tories, because in the last month or two they haven't spoken very much about the tax cuts. They've been so preoccupied about the American economy going down because then they would have to admit that we are so dependent on the Americans, that it was they who contributed the wealth of our economy and not their tax cuts. So God bless that this economy should continue because they can continue to say, "Jobs

equal tax cuts." But if that economy in the US sinks a little more than it has, we in Ontario inevitably, as we are so closely interlinked with each other, would fall with the big elephant. We would fall down.

What would this government and the member for Durham say then? What would he say then? He would still say, "Tax cuts create jobs," as he crumbles to the ground with the weight of the American economy going down. "Tax cuts create jobs," the member from Durham would say. Can you picture him as he plays Atlas, trying to hold the world up with the tax cut kind of politics? I can see that world just crushing him with the weight. Poor John, member from Durham. I can just see him; he's disappearing.

Speaker and good citizens, I have excoriated these people in a way I believe you understand, because I don't believe in tax cuts; I don't, while I know that many of you do.

I have asked you repeatedly in this House, first, "Have you seen the benefits of the tax cuts in your pocket?" and second, "Have you seen the benefits of the tax cuts as they relate to social or cultural life? Have you seen them?" I know that you have not seen any of those benefits. I know that 50% of you working Ontarians earn less than \$30,000, and what do you get back from this tax cut, this—eventually—\$12 billion—

**Mr Murdoch:** They don't pay tax.

**Mr Marchese:** "They don't pay anything, so they don't get anything back." Is that what you're saying? So, 50% of Ontarians don't pay any taxes, therefore they don't get any tax cuts back. Who gets it?

**Mr Murdoch:** Now you've got it right.

**Mr Marchese:** Billy, hold on, because I've got the floor. If 50% don't get anything because they don't pay any taxes, who gets it? The poor working man and woman doesn't get it. Once again it is the ones who earn the big bucks: the corporate welfare burns, the bankers.

**Mr Murdoch:** All the people who employ those people.

**Mr Marchese:** I'm looking at you, Mr Former Banker. Yes, you.

**Mr Murdoch:** You need someone to employ those people.

**Mr Marchese:** Billy, hold on, please. I've got the floor. Do engage me from time to time, but not every second.

Some \$12 billion taken out of our economy, out of our provincial coffers, for what? To please whom except that very special interest group that is so closely leeches to their bodies that they refuse to disappear. You've got to burn that leech from your arm, from your head, from your body, but it is not going to go away, that very special interest group that leeches and drills inside your body and controls your mind.

Those poor bankers are so unhappy because they can never make enough money, so they come to the Conservative bankers in the ranks—we've got one in this Conservative caucus—and they say, "We need more." Because this government says, "We don't make money,"

I say to you good citizens, but they collect money from the taxpayers. Whom do you give it to? You collect it and you give it back to the wealthy. Why would you do that? What kind of a government exists to satisfy the needs of the very wealthy?

You're either there as a government or you're not. But you shouldn't be there to satisfy the predatory—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** —yes, they are predatory—those moneyed needs of these few special interest friends of yours who can never get enough from you, because they want more and more. No matter how much you reduce their taxes, they say, "It's not enough."

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services):** Are you talking about Buzz?

**Mr Marchese:** I'm talking about you, Mr Banker. Mr Sampson, I'm talking about you, member for Mississauga Centre.

**Hon Mr Sampson:** What happened to Buzz?

**Mr Marchese:** He's not a banker; you are. The problem with you guys is that you listen to these leeches, these corporate welfare bums who can never get enough from you. They're saying, "The only way to create jobs is, of course, to continue to cut our corporate taxes." Until when? Until they pay no more? Is that it, member for Mississauga Centre, former banker? Is that what it's all about, so you eliminate taxes altogether from the corporate sector? What kind of society do we have then? Who pays taxes then? If the corporate sector doesn't want to pay any more, who is left to pay?

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**Hon Mr Sampson:** The way you guys were going, nobody was going to be paying taxes.

**Mr Marchese:** Nobody is going to pay. You're right. That's why I often refer to this society that has been formulated, constructed by the Tories, as a Darwinian society.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Darwinian, a dog-eat-dog kind of world. Survival of the fittest.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** You are there to support whom? Those who need—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The member for Etobicoke North will find his seat or find his way out.

The member for Trinity-Spadina.

**Mr Marchese:** The member for Etobicoke North wasn't so bad. I kind of like John.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** Always picking on me.

**Mr Marchese:** It's the Speaker.

I say to myself, what purpose do you serve as a government? Traditionally, governments are there to serve those whom the market fails. You understand that the market isn't there for everybody. Some people fall through the cracks. You understand that, right? It's again Darwinian; the market economy is Darwinian. You do well, and sometimes people do not, so the purpose of government is to control that particular problem. You

offer a safety valve as a government. But you people have forgotten what governments existed for.

In the 1940s, after the Second World War, governments, in order to protect themselves from class war, created a whole lot of social programs as safety valves so that the poor wouldn't battle the very wealthy. We gave them unemployment insurance. We gave them some modest pension—not too much—because you don't want to make people lazy. We gave them the Workers' Compensation Board. Why? Because insurance companies said, "Ha, there's a cheaper way to do it." We gave them so many social programs. We gave a little welfare to those little people who might otherwise steal, who might otherwise rebel some day and possibly become revolutionary in their fervour to attack those who have and those who do not.

Conservative governments all over the industrial world understood that, but you people are forgetting, and the young ones there are forgetting faster than those who ought not to have forgotten. So both youngies and oldies have forgotten. There is no more collective consciousness, no more collective memory, no historical understanding of why the Conservative governments even of that time understood that you've got to give the little people—the rabble, the working man and woman, those who work hard for a living and get so little back and those who fall through the cracks—a few crumbs so that their revolutionary fervour is tamed, dissipated. That's why it was there, and you people are forgetting.

I've got to tell you, boys and girls, the class war is going to reappear, because inequality has reappeared under you fine people.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** How lovely it is; isn't it? Class war must be good.

Bill 45 gives \$2.4 billion, or \$4 billion, really—it's within that range—to the corporate sector at a time, member for Etobicoke North, when the corporate sector has done so well, and you guys give them another gift. Why would you do that? They don't need the money. They don't create jobs. In this place I've often said, "Show me the evidence." Where are the economists who say that the 10 billion bucks you people have put forward are creating the 700,000 jobs that have been created in this economy? Show me the economists. Bring them in this place. Except that they simply say they create jobs; they just say it. You don't have to listen to any other economists; you just have to say it, because by the strange alchemy of the 21st century, we are able to just magically reproduce it.

I've got to tell you, good citizens, the reason why tax cuts have been destructive is because they take money out of our coffers, and in order to make up for 10 to 12—

**Mr Dunlop:** Are you still babbling about that?

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Yes, I know. Where's my good buddy here from? Simcoe North, and Oxford. You can't argue with the facts. The member from Simcoe North asks, "Are you still talking about tax cuts?" Yes.

**Mr Dunlop:** Yes, we are. Revenues are up \$15 billion. Figure it out.

**Mr Marchese:** Figure what out, member from Simcoe North?

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Marchese:** Figure what out, member from Simcoe North? Get a pencil and do what? Get a pencil and tell you that you've had to devastate our health care system and our education system, where we say that you took out \$2 billion and the minister says, "Oh no, the facts are we put in \$2 billion"? You guys are beautiful, right? You take \$2 billion out. They say, "Uh, uh, we put it in." And those are the facts. Why? Because the member from Simcoe North says, "Those are the facts." He got his calculator out and he said, "There's \$2 billion popped right in." There he goes. What are you talking about, member from Simcoe North?

**Mr Dunlop:** The revenues are up with the tax cuts. Figure it out.

**Mr Marchese:** Revenues are up. I said to the member from Simcoe North that he is lucky. We are lucky that the American economy has been good. I know how you laugh at that. You guys always laugh at that.

**Hon Mrs Johns:** —every American state. How did their—

**The Deputy Speaker:** OK. The associate Minister of Health may find her way out of here shortly.

**Mr Marchese:** You understand, good citizens, this is the only dialogue I get with the members, right? There's no other debate. If I don't debate them in this manner, we don't have a debate in this place. You understand. Bills are not debated any longer because, through the fine wisdom of these people, they don't have to consult with

you because they consulted you in 1999. I've got to engage them in this way. It is the only little debate I get from them.

The Speaker understands this, although he's got to control them to some extent. But I've got to do my best to try to squeeze something out of you, because I won't be able to squeeze anything out of the Minister of Education. When I say to the minister, "Minister, we need public hearings," she says, "Blah, blah, blah." What I wanted from the Minister of Education was to say, "Yes." I wanted her to go to the Minister of Finance and say, "Look, you got me into this mess. Now we need hearings."

I feel bad for Janet, I really do, because she had nothing to do with this tax credit. Flaherty, through his arrogance as the Minister of Finance, left Janet Ecker, the Minister of Education, on her own. La pauvre Janet. Toute seule. Abandonnée par le ministre. She's got to defend every day the decision of the Minister of Finance. Every day she's got to circumvent; she's got to circle around questions over and over. She can never answer directly why it is that she said six months ago, "We cannot take \$3 million out of our public system to give it to religious schools." When asked, she doesn't answer that question. I said to the Minister of Education, "You've been quoted. You're on paper. You can't deny what you said." She refuses to say, "You're right, Rosario Marchese."

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. It being 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 2130.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
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Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
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		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
		Vaughan-King-Aurora	Vacant

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

## **STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop  
Gilles Bisson, Garfield Dunlop,  
Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy, Frances Lankin,  
Frank Mazzilli, Ted McMeekin, Bill Murdoch  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

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No. 20A

Nº 20A

ISSN 1180-2987

# Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

**Tuesday 29 May 2001**

Mardi 29 mai 2001

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 29 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 29 mai 2001

*The House met at 1330.*

*Prayers.*

### VISITORS

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to acknowledge today a visit by a very special group of people from my alma mater, Pauline Johnson high school. Teacher Jeff Goodall and the class have come to learn all about democracy and see our Legislature at work.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### FORT HENRY

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** On May 23 Fort Henry won the Oscar of Canadian tourism by being chosen the number one Canadian attraction of national and international interest at the gala awards ceremony in Halifax by Attractions Canada, an organization that's a national partnership program between government, private enterprise and the national media. Its mission is to recognize our country's many beautiful attractions and make them better known to the Canadian public.

It's a fitting testimony to the importance of Old Fort Henry, built in 1832 to protect Canada from potential American invaders, as the national historic site and its proud place in the development of Canada. It's a tribute to all the people, including the hundreds of students who have served since 1938 in the fort's guard, and all others who have worked and who continue to work there and all those who have supported their efforts.

The fort has been managed and operated by the province for more than 60 years. The opportunities that lie ahead in terms of global promotions through Attractions Canada are enormous. But as I've mentioned in this House previously, on numerous occasions, the fort needs at least \$25 million in repairs to make it structurally sound. The damage caused by water seeping into the ramparts, freezing and expanding, is so severe that a large section of the parade square has been roped off.

LCBO employees, under a program called "I Support Fort Henry," hope to raise \$100,000 in repair money over the next year.

I once again plead with the government to let the reconstruction program begin and to match the federal funding of \$5 million in order to make an effective start on the much-needed emergency repairs. Match this federal money today.

### EVENTS IN DURHAM

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** As the member for Durham, I'm always pleased to tell Ontario about the many positive things taking place in my riding.

Today I want to talk about township of Scugog Councillor Larry Corrigan, who is participating in the 12-hour Relay for Life walk, an event sponsored by the Canadian Cancer Society, taking place in 25 track and field locations across Ontario this weekend. The Relay for Life starts at 8 pm Friday, June 1, and ends at 8 am June 2.

Councillor Corrigan has said he is participating in the walk in memory of his late wife, Sandra, who, sadly passed away in 1988, and for all the township of Scugog residents who have been the victims of cancer. The statistics are staggering when you think that 134,100 people this year alone are estimated to find out that they have one form of cancer or another.

I want to thank all my constituents from Oshawa, Port Perry, Blackstock, Bowmanville, Orono and Newcastle, who will also participate in the Relay for Life this Friday night in Oshawa. Your actions are bringing us closer to finding a cure.

I'd also like to mention that plans are already in the works for the 2001 Terry Fox Run in the municipality of Clarington this coming September 1. Event organizer Walter Gibson is assembling his team to make this year's run more successful than ever.

Last Thursday morning in Bowmanville I was honoured to attend a special breakfast honouring corporate sponsors. We were fortunate to have had Darrell Fox as our guest speaker. He eloquently spoke of the tremendous impact that Terry Fox has made on all cancer victims and their families.

I would like to thank them for their ongoing support.

### PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** Today I would like to tell you about a young man from my riding who was involved in a serious swimming

accident and is now a quadriplegic. Marc Pilon, a young, 20-year-old college student from Plantagenet was actively involved in many sports but today his dreams of participating are on hold.

What a remarkable man he is. Marc's positive attitude and determination are evident when you meet him. He has a goal, and that goal is to be able to walk again. Marc has fallen through the cracks of our health care system. Marc was part of a pilot project and receiving physiotherapy at the Ottawa Hospital. This clinic provided him with a successful program that kept his hopes up that one day he would walk again.

Due to the cuts under OHIP his time on this program is over. Marc cannot afford \$480 a week for a physiotherapy program at a NeuroGym. When we consider Marc's youth, his positive attitude and his potential to contribute to society, we must find a way to help Marc. This is a worthwhile investment and I ask the Minister of Health to find a way to help Marc.

Minister, you must meet him. Ron MacLean of Hockey Night in Canada met him and was impressed with his progress. I beg you, Minister, find a way to help Marc walk again. He has the will and determination. OHIP must come up with financial assistance to help Marc. We must find a way to help him.

#### VOLUNTEERS

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** I'm very pleased today to announce to the House the work and dedication of some outstanding volunteers in my constituency. I would like to acknowledge the dedication of several individuals who have volunteered their time to the Upper Canada Lodge in Niagara-on-the-Lake. These individuals have volunteered their time to the Upper Canada Lodge for the past 10 years and continue to do so. I would like to thank Doris Laverick, Joyce Dineley, Carole Smithe, John Chabot, Florence Bennett and Liz Walker-Neuhof.

I recently toured Upper Canada Lodge and the folks who gave me the tour were actually four family members of residents or past residents of Upper Canada Lodge. They too volunteer their time at the lodge. I want to thank them for the tour and letting me know first-hand of their concerns at Upper Canada Lodge.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge the dedication of Helen Orr. Helen has been a volunteer at Dorchester Manor for over 25 years. Helen is in her late 80s and is a talented piano player who brings joy to the residents of Dorchester Manor with her music.

It is the dedication and compassion of these people and others like them that make my community a better and friendlier place to live and raise a family. On behalf of the government and my constituency I say thank you to all of them.

#### WALKERTON TRAGEDY

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** I rise today to recognize the

people of Erinsville, a village in my riding, for an extraordinary initiative. This community was so moved by the tragedy in Walkerton that they created the Walkerton Comforter, a quilt that expressed their condolences and sympathies to the people of Walkerton on the anniversary of their loss.

What was started by a small group from Erinsville grew into a project with national scope, and the comforter was recently presented to the people of Walkerton. One project participant explained, "We sadly witnessed your community's saga of dismay, distress and death ... the trauma of the events as they unfolded made us want to do something, anything to help, but we felt powerless, as we are sure you did too. This comforter is as much about tending to our grief as it is about speaking to your own grief."

1340

This quilt depicts ways that our air, land and water are threatened. It shows ways to keep our environment clean and safe, not only for us but also for our children. People from across Canada sent in signed cloth teardrops to be included in the quilt, expressing their love and sympathy. This quilt is a reminder to all Canadians, not just the people of Walkerton, that our environment is fragile and must be respected.

The people of Erinsville have dedicated the quilt to the memory of those from Walkerton who lost their lives. It is a tangible symbol of the love and sympathy of an entire nation for a community that has endured a great tragedy.

#### EDIBLE PACKAGING

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I am very pleased to rise today in recognition of some students at the University of Guelph who have developed a product of edible packaging.

We must look for innovative ways to reduce our hazardous waste, and this product is a great one, made with soy products. A trio of biological engineering students at Guelph university developed the substitute packaging made from soy flour and glycerine. In one form, this packaging product could be a biodegradable replacement for the Styrofoam meat tray. In another form, and by changing the recipe slightly, the packaging becomes edible. Think about eating a plate of delicious cookies and the plate tastes good as well.

In a recent news article, students stated that the soy makes the packaging nutritious, the glycerine makes it flexible and the sugar makes it delicious.

Cost becomes a factor in any new product, but the students have indicated that with mass production the edible soy packaging would be within a few cents of the cost of producing Styrofoam. I don't think many of us would object to spending a few more cents to help our environment.

I would like to commend these students for their innovative work on this product. As we often say, our young people have wonderful ideas. We just have to learn to listen to them.

## HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** Daily, we hear rhetoric in this House and in this province on how much better health care is now, compared to 1995. I challenge each Ontario resident to consider that and review what their hospital was like six years ago.

We had occasion last week to take our three-year-old son to an emergency ward. The service provided by the staff and by the doctors was superb, but nine of the emergency room beds are lined up in a hallway with numbers painted on the wall beside them. Patients are being examined and treated in a hallway. Our senior citizens are lying in hallways waiting for beds to be freed up. This is appalling.

Yet, in my riding, we know that Quinte Healthcare Corp continues to face a \$5-million deficit in the coming year. Ironically, the only way they could get additional funding from this government is by cutting essential services. Hospitals are being rewarded for cutting services rather than for providing good service. That, I also find appalling.

I call upon this government to consider not just spending the money on ads, not doing rhetoric, but to genuinely fund the one publicly funded, one-tier health care system that the people of this province value and demand and were promised in the 1999 election. It has not been delivered. The people of Ontario demand that we have one-tier, quality health care.

## IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE SERVICES

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I rise today to bring to the attention of the House an important and historical event happening in my riding of Hamilton West. Today, SISO, the Settlement and Integration Services Organization, is opening up their new offices at Liuna Station.

I would remind members of this House that Hamilton is the third-largest receiving centre for new Canadians arriving as immigrants or refugees, the second-largest in Ontario, and that SISO provides services to these new Canadians.

I'd like to take just a moment to read their mission statement:

"Settlement and Integration Services Organization is a community-based agency which exists to serve immigrant and refugee communities in the Hamilton-Wentworth area and advocates/asserts/supports the right of all people to fully participate in the social, economic, political and cultural life of society."

I would bring to the attention of members that SISO services, on a yearly basis, 5,000 first-time clients and up to 20,000 returning clients.

I know the members of the House would want to know that it's opening in a historic building, the old CN station, where literally tens of thousands of new Canadians first came to Hamilton. LIUNA has refurbished this building, and that is indeed the new home. I would ask all

members of the House to join me in welcoming SISO into their new offices.

## PEEL REGIONAL POLICE FORCE

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I would like to honour the work of Peel Regional Police, one of Canada's largest police agencies, which employs 508 civilians and almost 1,400 sworn officers. It was the first police service in Ontario and the fifth in Canada to be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies.

The number of programs that this police force is involved in is unique. That's why I'd like to further endorse their work by saying they are in fact the best police force in Canada. They are involved in community policing; community stations; airport policing; Peel Crime Stoppers; RAID—which is Reduce Abuse in Drugs—activities to heighten self-esteem; and Peel Children's Safety Village.

Their "pure patrol" is something that I think is really working for our communities. That is where the police are actually getting out of their vehicles and getting to know the people who live in the community.

They also have a cyberproofing program for children who are taught how to protect themselves from being exploited and becoming victims of abuse on the Internet.

The community policing aspect of Peel Regional Police is working. I stand here today feeling extremely proud and grateful to all our officers, men and women, who are exemplary and dedicated to the well-being of the people of Peel.

## ROYAL ASSENT

### SANCTION ROYALE

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Administrator of Ontario has been pleased to assent to a certain bill.

**Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman):** The following is the title of the bill to which His Honour did assent:

Bill 55, An Act to protect the Oak Ridges Moraine / Projet de loi 55, Loi visant à protéger la moraine d'Oak Ridges.

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Yesterday I tabled a resolution requiring that the Premier agree to meet with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee. I would ask for unanimous consent to debate and pass the resolution today.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek the unanimous consent of this House to have an emergency debate today at 6:45 pm

regarding the need for a public inquiry into obstruction of justice around the prosecution of pedophiles in Cornwall.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### TENANT PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DES LOCATAIRES

Mr Marchese moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 63, An Act to amend the Tenant Protection Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 63, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la protection des locataires.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** The bill amends the Tenant Protection Act, 1997, to provide that when a tenant is evicted or leaves on receiving a notice of termination and leaves property behind, the landlord is required to keep the property available for retrieval for 30 days and to compensate the tenant for any loss or damage to it.

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**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I ask that leave be granted to have unanimous consent to allow for the singing of our national anthem, O Canada, once a week in this Legislature, as was just adopted by the Nova Scotia Legislature? I would like to follow that lead and I seek unanimous consent.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I seek unanimous consent for a motion in which this House declares that full, province-wide public hearings on the government's plans to fund private schools are absolutely essential. Brief hearings limited to Toronto on Bill 45 are not enough.

This enormous tax bill contains 256 sections. Only three of them deal with the government's proposal to fund private schools. So, for each six-hour day of public hearings on Bill 45, logically only four minutes and 12 seconds would be given to public funding for private schools. That's clearly not enough and that's why we need province-wide hearings on something that is so dramatic and so draconian.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

## PREMIER'S ATTENDANCE

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: We in the official opposition were informed that the Premier would be present for

question period today. Perhaps it's been so long since he's been here that he forgets what time it starts.

**The Speaker:** As you know, the Speaker isn't aware of what arrangements would be made. What will be helpful, of course, as is a tradition here, is to let the opposition parties know so they can schedule their questions. I'm sure that's being done.

If on an ongoing basis that isn't being done, then hopefully the two sides can work it out. There is nothing in the standing orders that allows the Speaker to interfere in that process.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** In the absence of the Premier, I'll go to the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Finance. I must say at the outset that I am delighted and honoured that he's putting in a cameo appearance here today. It's very meaningful to us.

Minister, during the leaders' debate your Premier looked directly into the TV camera and said the following: "I've been asked, would I support private schools? I want to tell you, I went to the Jewish Congress and I said no. My priority is public education." Everybody knows that the Premier said something at that time and he's saying something completely different today. He made a specific commitment back then to voters, and today he's saying something entirely different. He gave working families his word of honour and he has now dishonoured them by breaking his word.

Will you have the decency here and now, Minister, to admit that your government, through your Premier, has broken its promise?

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I thank the member opposite for raising the question of where I've been. I'm proud to tell the member that I've travelled to London, Ontario, to Ottawa, to New York and also to Tokyo and Hong Kong—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. Sorry for the interruption, Deputy Premier.

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** —as Minister of Finance, as is the tradition following delivery of the budget, to help explain to investors and other officials around the world the good news in Ontario about our vibrant economy, about our balanced budget for the third year in a row, about the largest payment in history reducing the public debt of the province of Ontario, about low, competitive taxes, all the good news about creating this vibrant economy, unlike the bad news from 1985 to 1990 under the Liberals opposite.

**Mr McGuinty:** I can see that the government's seals of approval are in fine form, but I wonder, Minister, if you might focus on the question at hand. There's a very serious issue before Ontario's working families. They're

very concerned about your plans, which are going to cause serious damage to public education for their children.

If you want, I would be quite prepared to have you refer this question to the Premier. I'll return to the Premier. Premier, why don't you admit to the Ontario public that you have broken a very specific promise made during the course of the campaign, that you have renounced an undertaking you gave in a letter to me, in letters directed to the federal Liberal government when you said that funding of private schools would both weaken and undermine public education, when you said it was going to cost taxpayers somewhere between \$300 million and \$700 million? Will you now admit that you have broken your specific promise made to Ontario's working families?

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** On the question of approval, and I think the member opposite for raising the question of approval, there is substantial disapproval with respect to the tax increases that were brought in by the Liberal government from 1985 to 1990. They raised the sales tax from 7% to 8%, raised the fuel tax twice and established the employer health tax in 1989. Although taking in record revenues, they kept increasing the public debt. What they appreciate across Canada, across Ontario and across the world now is the fact that we have a vibrant economy, low competitive taxes and a brilliant future for this province.

**Mr McGuinty:** We are very much concerned about the future of our province. We are very much concerned about the quality of public education available to all our children. If you don't understand this, you should understand that a highly skilled and educated workforce is instrumental in giving us a competitive edge and that it all begins with a government that supports public education.

Why not have the decency now to inject a bit of honesty into this debate? Why not admit that your government took a very specific position? They said that this policy, which you now warmly embrace, would cause grievous harm to public education. You said that it would weaken it, that it would undermine it. You said it would cost somewhere between \$300 million and \$700 million. Why not now admit that this policy you've embarked our province on will be harmful to our children and harmful to our future?

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** Our commitment to public education is firm and fully financed, with additional spending of \$360 million in this budget for public education in this province, which includes francophone education, separate schools and public schools. There is a difference, though, when it comes to choice. We believe parents should have a choice in the education of their children. What we hear from the other side, from Dalton McGuinty, is that Dalton McGuinty thinks his opinion should substitute for the opinion of parents with respect to the education of their own children in Ontario.

**The Speaker:** New question, leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, I'm sure that—  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Come to order, please, so that we can ask the question. Leader of the official opposition, sorry for the interruption.

1400

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, this question is to you. I am sure you will understand that the Ontario public and especially our working families are looking forward to hearing from you on this very important issue. During the course of the leaders' debate, you said, "I've been asked, would I support private schools? I went to the Jewish Congress and I said no, my priority is public education." You then summed up that portion of the debate with the following words, and these are your words: "Colin's question was, 'Mike Harris, will you categorically guarantee that you are not going to support private schools?' I said, 'Yes.'"

You made a specific commitment to Ontario's working families. They relied on that promise. You gave them your word of honour, and you have now clearly dishonoured them by breaking your word. Will you now stand up in your place and admit that you have broken your promise and apologize to Ontario's working families?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think I have been very clear when I was asked in the leaders' debate, did I support charter schools or vouchers or would I bring them in in this session? I made it very clear that, no, our first priority is the public education system, and our first priority still is the public education system and full funding of that system. However, the program we brought in, of tax credit, is for parents, not for private schools. It is for parents. It is for parents and as a matter of fairness and for choice for those parents who opt for an alternative form of education.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** Weasel words.

**The Speaker:** Order. Sorry to interrupt. Member for Essex, you've got to withdraw. You cannot yell that across. We're not going to start with any unparliamentary language. I would ask you to withdraw, member for Essex; withdraw the "weasel words" you said, please.

**Mr Crozier:** I withdraw.

**Hon Mr Harris:** Thank you very much—

**The Speaker:** I've asked the member for Essex to withdraw what he yelled out. I'm asking him to withdraw it now or I am going to name him.

**Mr Crozier:** I did.

**The Speaker:** Sorry, I was looking at the Premier; the Premier was up. I did not hear it, and I have to hear it. I apologize; there were two talking at once. I would ask you to withdraw it, please.

**Mr Crozier:** I withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Sorry for the interruption, Premier.

**Hon Mr Harris:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

The only inconsistency is with the leader of the Liberal Party, and the only ongoing inconsistency is, are you in favour or are you opposed? Which members of your caucus are in favour? Which members of your

caucus are opposed? I've seen your position explained as "We're in favour of the public education system and that has to be our first priority." Well, that's been our position. That's been my position for 21 years.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, you can't fool all the people all the time. You've been found out on this particular matter. You said you weren't going to send money from public schools over to private schools. You were clear and unequivocal about that. Now the fact is that you're doing that, and you're telling us now that really you're not doing that, because you're not sending it to the schools, you're sending it to the parents.

Maybe I'll draw your attention to a letter dated January 13, 2000, from your Minister of Education to Minister Axworthy, where she says the following: "While the government of Ontario recognizes the right of parents to choose alternative forms of education for their children, it continues to have no plans to provide funding to private religious schools or to parents of children that attend such schools." So if you want to talk about inconsistency, Premier, I suggest that you take a long, hard look in the mirror.

I'll ask you again, on behalf of Ontario's working families, why have you changed your mind? Why have you broken your promise? Why have you dishonoured Ontario's working families?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I think you heard in the budget that was brought down this year that the feeling of the Minister of Finance was that we were in a financial position now to begin retiring debt, to fully fund the public schools, to put over 5% more into health care and to be able to address new issues.

I want to make it very clear and the Minister of Finance has made it very clear that the extension of tax credits to parents, particularly for low- and middle-income families, to improve their choice on education, and particularly those low- and middle-income families that are paying twice for education, takes not one cent away from public education in this province.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, you sang a different tune a little while back, and Ontario's working families are trying to figure out whether they believe yesterday's Mike Harris or today's Mike Harris. What you said before, Premier, in your letter to me of January 18, 2000, was, "Complying with the UN's demand would remove from our existing public education system at least \$300 million per year, with some estimates as high as \$700 million. Obviously such an action would run directly counter to Ontario's long-standing commitment to public education."

It seems to me you are making this stuff up as you go. You're embarrassed. You're ashamed. You made a specific commitment. People now understand that you don't follow through on everything you committed to. The jig is up. Why not do the decent and honourable thing? Stand up, apologize to Ontario's working families and withdraw this policy.

**Hon Mr Harris:** First of all, when referring to the United Nations, here are the alternatives the United

Nations gave us—and I rejected all three—(1) to provide direct funding to private religious schools equivalent to our Catholic and public schools; I rejected that; (2) to eliminate funding separate schools; I rejected that; (3) to provide religious instruction in the public schools. We rejected that as well, as we reject the right of the United Nations to tell us how we're going to fund our public education system.

Second, I make no apologies for this government correcting the finances of this province, for getting us into a surplus position, for getting us now to the lowest tax rates for our small and medium-sized businesses, for getting our entrepreneurs into a tax-competitive position, for lowering taxes for hard-working taxpayers and families of this province and for now being able to be in a financial position to give double-digit increases to health care and—

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Premier, your two weeks of limited public hearings on Bill 45 are a sham. Given the fact you've totally reversed your position on public funds for private schools, and given the fact that this is going to have a dramatic effect on public schools, to limit hearings to two weeks in Toronto just won't do. Tell us why you think the rest of the people of Ontario should be shut out of public hearings when it's their schools that are going to be affected too. Why should they be shut down, and how do you justify that?

**Hon Mr Harris:** On the whole question of hearings, we'd actually like to get public input and advice on implementation of the bill. These tax credits, as you know, are very small, particularly the beginning years, and they don't kick in for another year. We are interested in getting advice. We'd like to provide as much time as is required, both in hearings and any other outside advice we can get, and any advice you have on how we can implement this in as fair, proper and correct a manner as possible. I don't think there's been a suggestion the hearings ought to be limited. This is something the House leaders and the committee members can talk about.

**Mr Hampton:** Our advice is: don't do this. Stop it in its tracks right now. It's the wrong thing to do. When we talked with Ministry of Finance staff, this is what they told us: in effect now private school parents are now going to get five—count them—tax breaks. They'll get federal and provincial child care tax breaks. They'll get federal and provincial religious charitable donation tax breaks, and now they'll get your \$3,500-a-year private school tax credit. What it amounts to is this: you're loading the deck in favour of private education. My question is, before you load the deck in favour of private schools, don't you think the people of Ontario deserve a say via public hearings on what's going to happen?

1410

**Hon Mr Harris:** This is really the same question that we took to the people in 1995 and 1999. In essence, here was the question: do you want individuals to pay more taxes, as the Liberals and NDP campaigned for, or do

you want individuals to pay less taxes, as we campaigned for? Every initiative we brought in so that hard-working families could pay less taxes, you vote against and the Liberals vote against; every initiative so that hard-working families can pay less taxes, we vote for and you vote against. We understand that. We know that. We understand there are some people who actually support you high taxers who want to take more money from hard-working families because you think you can spend it better than they can. We fundamentally disagree. That's why we were elected in 1995 and in 1999, and I suggest to you in 2003 or 2004 we'll be re-elected again.

**Mr Hampton:** What we get, Premier, is the lengths your government is prepared to go in order to load the deck in favour of private education. Let me give you the numbers. For a family with an income of \$100,000 a year, if they send two children to private schools, with private school total tuition of \$14,000, what it amounts to, with your tax credit and the other tax breaks, is almost \$10,000 in tax breaks to send their children to private schools. That's very generous funding for private schools at the same time that you're forcing public school boards to cut their budgets.

The question of fairness is this: before you load the deck in favour of private schools while you deprive public schools, don't you think you ought to have the courage to go out there and hold public hearings across the province so people can have their say?

**Hon Mr Harris:** First of all, we're happy to have public hearings. We're happy to hear from the public, and they'll have their opportunity both on the policy and the implementation of the policy. We welcome that advice.

But again, I make no apologies for hard-working families to try and lessen the tax burden on these families. I think this is something we are elected to do; it's something we're committed to do. If I could eliminate taxes completely, I'd be happy to do it.

On the other hand, by lowering the tax rates from the punitive rates you had, making sure that we're competitive, we've found that we get more people working; we get more people off welfare. In turn, we get the kinds of dollars we need to put double-digit increases into the health care system, to put 360 million new dollars into the public education system. So it's only through tax competitiveness, in getting our tax rates to where they're competitive, that we've been able to put all these new dollars into priority programs like public education and health care.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Hampton:** What's clear, Premier, is the extent to which you're willing to go to give parents who are already well off more and more enticements so they'll send their kids to private schools and undermine the public school system. That's what is clear.

There's another element to this. When we talked to your Ministry of Finance officials they told us that private schools get to select what children they want, that private schools are not bound by any of the other rules

that govern our public schools, such as non-discrimination, such as not discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation, on the basis of ethnic origin, that they get to pick the kids. You give them public money but they get to pick the kids. Premier, that sounds to me like your government wants to fund discrimination. Before you do that, don't you think you should hold province-wide hearings so that people across the province can have their say on those issues as well?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I have never heard such a silly stretch of the facts in all of my life. First of all, we've already said we're committed to have public hearings. Secondly, if you know of any individual, any institution, any school that is violating the human rights charter here in the province of Ontario, we have laws to prevent that, we have anti-discriminatory laws, and they will be enforced. To stand in this place and make that kind of allegation, that there is blatant discrimination anywhere, and not refer that to the Ontario Human Rights Commission is a disgrace.

**Mr Hampton:** Well, Premier, you should talk to your Ministry of Finance officials, because they acknowledge that in the private school system it is children with special needs and disabled children who are in fact not accepted, that they are mostly excluded from the private school system. They point out that under your proposal there is absolutely no plan whatsoever to tell those schools that they must accept all children.

So, Premier, before you load the deck even further, before you give public money to private schools that then can say, "But we don't want your child and we don't want your child and there's no place for your child," before you fund that kind of discrimination, hold public hearings across the province and let the citizens of the province tell you how they feel about that. Do you have the courage to do it, Premier?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I've announced public hearings. Is that what you're asking me: do I have the courage to have public hearings?

You see, we've had more public hearings on more government bills than the NDP ever had, than the Liberals ever had. We've had more hours, we've had more hearings, we've had more public input; not only that, but we've consulted a lot more in advance of the bills before they've gone out for public input. So of course we said we will have public hearings.

As to any matters of discrimination, these are matters where we have laws in this country and in this province on all institutions, and these laws are there.

Thirdly, we're not planning to give five cents to any private schools.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr McGuinty:** My question is for the Premier. Premier, you told us a few moments ago, and we've heard this refrain now time and time again, that the motivation behind your voucher program is to correct inequities, as you've just said, and to help out low- and middle-income families.

I've got the fee schedule here for 2001-02 for Upper Canada College. Do you know what the fees are for day

students this year, Premier? They're \$16,690. Do you know what the fees are for boarding students?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Sorry to interrupt the leader of the official opposition. The member for Brampton Centre, come to order. This is his last warning. If he yells like that, he's out.

Leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** For boarding students at Upper Canada College, the fees this year are \$29,690.

On behalf of Ontario's working families, Premier, can you tell us why it is in their interests that you take money out of public schools and send it over to parents of children who are attending Upper Canada College to help defray some of the expenditures?

**Hon Mr Harris:** First of all, it may have been the Liberals' intention to take money from public education to support private schools, but that's not our intention. We will not take five cents; we will take nothing away from public education in this province to implement a tax credit policy of fairness for families. So let's just make sure we have the record straight on that. It's not the way the Liberals were planning to do it. The way we do it is, not five cents out of public education.

Secondly, the tax credit, as you know, does not cover boarding costs that you mention in your question. I'm surprised you didn't know that, and I'm delighted you asked the question because we've been quite clear about that.

Thirdly, the tax credit, when fully implemented six years from now, will only cover 50% of up to \$7,000, which fits into the category of École Parsifal in Ottawa South, Lycée Claudel in Ottawa South, \$5,960, these kinds of schools. So some parents may choose to pay more or to board their students, but that of course will not be covered by—

**The Speaker:** The Premier's time is up. Final supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** You're the one who maintains that the purpose of this policy is to correct inequities and to help out lower- and middle-income families. Well, in the case of Upper Canada College, maybe you could explain to Ontario's working families—who, by the way, have some 35,000 of their children on a waiting list for psychological assessment because of all the school boards that have had to fire their psychologists, and, by the way, 42% of Ontario's parents in our elementary schools are out there raising money day in and day out for textbooks and computers.

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Those working families of whom I speak, Premier, want to know why it is that you have \$500 million for private schools but you don't have money to correct pressing problems they've got to contend with, day in and day out. They want to know why it is that you are coming to the rescue of parents who are sending their kids to Upper Canada College, who are already, without your assistance, paying fees in the neighbourhood of \$17,000 for a day student.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I assume you're in favour then of the \$1.37 billion in special education, more than any other government in Ontario's history, that we're investing in the public education system. I assume you're in favour of the tax cuts you voted against that gave us the prosperity so we could put \$360 million more this year into the public education system in Ontario.

I might say this: I understand why the Liberals are not asking for hearings. At least the NDP is consistent in wanting to have hearings.

**Mr McGuinty:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Had the Premier graced us with his presence here yesterday, he would have known that we raised that—

**The Speaker:** That is not a point of order. Premier.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I understand the embarrassment of the Liberal Party asking for hearings and why they didn't ask me today about hearings. When we had Bill 118, the Child and Family Services Amendment Act, the Liberals asked for hearings. We had hearings, and when we went to Sault Ste Marie not one Liberal member showed up for the hearings. So I assume that's why it's only the NDP that wants hearings and wants to get the input, and more credit to them.

#### IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICY

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship. As the minister knows, thousands of people from around the world come to Ontario every year to make new lives for themselves and their families, and we welcome them. This has always been one of our province's greatest strengths, even at the time that my own family came here in the Depression years. Yet there are significant financial costs associated with the immigration process, a process for which the federal government has primary responsibility. Can the minister tell the House what, if any, support the federal government provides for newcomers' settlement and training?

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors):** I want to thank my colleague the member for Mississauga South for her question and I want to indicate that the issues she raised are of concern to all members of this House. As we know, Ontario opens its doors to a significant number of immigrants every year. In fact, 1.3 million new Canadians have settled in Ontario in the last decade.

Whereas we take 60% of all of Canada's immigration, we're only getting 40% of the funding. We need to make sure that the federal government realizes there's a huge inequity here. Quebec gets 14% of the immigration but they get 33% of all the funding. Ontario taxpayers are paying that federal freight.

I want to urge all members of this House to contact the 100 Liberals in Ottawa from Ontario and tell them that we want this inequity dealt with in the best interests of all Ontarians, especially the support for new Canadians.

**Mrs Marland:** My own community of Mississauga has one of the fastest-growing populations in Ontario,

and we welcome thousands of immigrants who come to this province every year, many of whom arrive through sponsorship agreements. In fact, there are thousands of these agreements which fail when sponsors default on their obligations to support the immigrants whom they invited to Canada—908 people per month in the region of Peel alone. The bill for the region of Peel in failed sponsorships in the last decade is \$15 million.

The enforcement of sponsorship agreements is, again, a federal responsibility.

Would this minister tell the House what impact these failed sponsorships have on provincial services and what, if any, support Ontario receives from the federal government?

**Hon Mr Jackson:** First of all, the province of Ontario has a very strong record of support for its new Canadians who settle in our province. I know all members of the House to be concerned about the fact that we continue to increase our levels of support through a whole series of ministries and new programs. Our own Ministry of Citizenship provides over \$4 million to over 90 communities for agencies to deliver settlement services and new immigrant programs. The Attorney General's office, with taxpayers' dollars, supports almost \$15 million in legal aid for refugee claims and appeals. Our Ministry of Education provides \$42 million a year for adult ESL training and English-language training for over 70,000 school-aged children in the province.

As I said, we've had 1.3 million new Canadians in our province in a decade, and we need to make sure that the federal government steps up and stops undervaluing their commitments to new Canadians who settle in Ontario.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Stop the clock for a quick moment. We have in the members' gallery east Mr Doug Rollins, the member for Quinte from the 36th Parliament.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, Ontario hospitals have been in a state of continuous crisis since your government came into office and cut \$800 million from their budgets. Hospitals have tried to cope with the cuts. They shut down 5,500 acute care beds; they laid off 10,000 nurses; they closed their emergency rooms when the backlog of patients waiting for beds made it impossible to care for anyone else. And despite all of these efforts, a majority of Ontario hospitals have faced deficits every year. Every year, hospitals try to tell your government what they need if they're going to keep their doors open, and every year your government has played numbers games with hospital funding, reannouncing old money as if it was a new investment, waiting until the year's almost over to give hospitals their final budget, refusing to put a rational funding formula in place.

But Minister, last week you took the attack on hospitals to a new height. You accused hospital board members of intellectual dishonesty when they didn't welcome the reannouncement of the money you gave them last year. Minister, are you accusing hospital boards across this province of lying about the reality of their deficits?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** The honourable member wants to talk about numbers. I'm quite willing to do so, because if one looks at the past two fiscal years in this province, gross domestic product growth in this province was 11.6%, but hospital funding growth was 21.3%. In fact, since we got elected in 1995, hospital spending has increased by 30%. That indicates our commitment to hospitals—20% of that 30% was within the last two years alone. We have kept our promise on hospital spending and on health care spending. The health care budget in this year's budget has increased by 5.4%, which is significantly higher, once again, than population growth, higher than inflation, higher than GDP growth. We are putting health care as the primary responsibility of our funding requirements. It's 45 cents out of every program dollar we spent. Those are the numbers that she should be aware of.

**Mrs McLeod:** You accused hospital board members across this province of intellectual dishonesty. You said basically they were lying, and what you really want to do is discredit hospital board members so you don't have to acknowledge the reality of the \$750-million deficit that hospitals are facing across the province this year.

Minister, you can't keep avoiding it. The situation in hospitals is getting more critical all the time. In March of this year, hospital emergency rooms in Toronto alone were on critical care bypass 192 hours, the highest ever for one month and four times higher than in the same month last year. Those hospital deficits are going to force the layoff of thousands more nurses. I think maybe that's how you've decided to solve the nursing shortage: instead of hiring 3,000 nurses, you're going to force hospitals to fire 6,000 nurses. Minister, that means more beds closed, more surgery cancelled, more patients turned away from emergency rooms, and your response to all of that is to attack hospital board members. It is only too evident that you are deliberately setting public hospitals up for failure in exactly the same way you set public education up for failure so you could bring in private schools. I ask you, are you going to wait until hospital board members start to quit before you bring in your private hospitals or are you just going to go ahead and replace public boards with private companies?

1430

**Hon Mr Clement:** The honourable member spent most of her question attributing remarks to me which are perhaps sound with her but not with me. I can say to the honourable member that the remarks which she attributes to me were not made in that context. Indeed, the context was \$120 million more for hospitals announced last week alone to help those who have performed well to meet the needs of their community. That was the context of the announcement: \$120 million more into the hospital

system; \$120 million more of taxpayers' money for health care spending in this province.

I would say to the honourable member, and through her to any hospitals that are listening, that we have in our possession the operating plans of all the hospitals and we're going through a process of dialogue with the hospitals to meet their objectives and to see what parts of their operating plans meet accountability and meet the expectations of their community and which parts don't. That's a normal process, and the honourable member I think is stoking up something which does not in fact exist.

#### ALLEGED SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean):** My question is for the Solicitor General. Minister, on Christmas Eve of 1994, the Ontario Provincial Police issued a press release announcing that they were winding up an investigation into an alleged pedophile ring in the Cornwall area. They announced at that time that there were no charges to be laid. They condoned the investigation of the Cornwall police in 1992 and the board of commissioners of police of the Cornwall police department in a 1993 investigation, which also found that there were no charges to be laid and nothing was amiss.

Immediately thereafter, the citizens of Cornwall put some money together and did their own investigation. They obtained statements and affidavits. They travelled to Florida and they got registration slips at a motel on Birch Avenue known as the pedophile strip, and they served those documents on your department and on the department of the Attorney General of this government. Immediately thereafter, a new OPP investigation was commenced and miraculously 115 charges were laid.

My question, Mr Minister, is with regard to the first OPP investigation. What is your level of confidence with regard to the integrity of that investigation? How do you explain to the people of Ontario how that investigation and the previous two investigations by the Cornwall police missed all 115 charges?

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** This government certainly does not tolerate the abuse of children in any manner. I think everybody in this chamber would agree that our thoughts are with the entire community of Cornwall through this difficult time.

The member knows it would be inappropriate for me to comment on specific investigations.

As you are aware, the Harris government is committed to protecting children from abuse of all kinds, and particularly sexual abuse. I was proud to bring Christopher's Law, the first sex offender registry in the country, into law. As well, the OPP's child pornography section, Project P, is the largest such unit in Canada and is looked upon by other police services as the lead agency for investigations of these types of crime.

**Mr Guzzo:** Thank you, Mr Minister. But I'm not aware, having spent most of my adult life in a courtroom prior to coming to this Legislature, that you are not free

to comment on an investigation. Let me explain to you that if in 1994 the people of Cornwall, the citizens' group, had adopted that same position, the 115 charges that have been laid would not have been laid, sir. So I don't think it's fair to suggest that we cannot comment and we cannot look at investigations of this nature. In my opinion, sir, that is our responsibility in this House, and the people who were here in 1994 let the people of Ontario down by not questioning them.

But my supplementary, sir, is more basic. In light of the obvious situation with regard to that first investigation—I put this question to the OPP officers who debriefed me after the bill, my last bill in this House, and their answer, sir, was a little more enlightening than yours, quite frankly. In light of what obviously took place in that 1994 investigation, how can the people of this province be satisfied that similar matters are not taking place as we speak and have not taken place while we have been the government of this province? How do we know that as we talk today there are not similar situations being covered up in the province of Ontario?

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** The OPP, at the request of the Cornwall Police Service, has investigated a number of allegations of sexual abuse in the Cornwall area dating back several years. Since July 1997, when Project Truth was initiated, 115 charges have been laid against 15 people. The integrity of all aspects of the justice system rests on its ability to proceed without interference. Charges may still be pending, and let me assure you that the book is not fully closed on whether charges will be laid. Any further comment by me would be inappropriate.

#### COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** My question is to the Minister of Health. Yesterday I asked a question about community care access centres and the fact that, as we speak, tens of thousands of frail seniors and persons with disabilities are receiving notices that their in-home care services are being dramatically cut or eliminated. The associate Minister of Health provided this House with a list of initiatives by your government over the last five to six years, so that's on the record. What I want to ask you to do, Minister, is to please address the issues of today.

Community care access centres have been providing services above their allocated budgets. Each year your ministry has been doing year-end adjustments to provide them with money, but that has not been rolled into their base budget. Now, without that base budget increase and with your new no-deficit law, they have no alternative but to cut those services. Those are real people who have been receiving real services and those services are being cut. Minister, are you going to accept those cuts in services to frail seniors and persons with disabilities or are you going to address the base funding shortfall for community needs?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** As the honourable member may know,

since we came to power, the in-home funding has increased by over 72%, close to 73%. So I don't think it would be a fair characterization of our funding to suggest, by any stretch of the imagination, that we have not met some of the funding increases due to growth, due to utilization and due to the demands in the system that are met by CCACs and by the agencies that report to them. We are, of course, seized with some of the new budgets that have been put forward by the CCACs and we will be examining them closely to make sure they meet the needs of citizens in Ontario, but we also have to do so in a fiscally responsible and accountable manner. That's what we expect of every single transfer agency that reports to the people of Ontario through the government of Ontario and its funding.

**Ms Lankin:** Minister, please, over the last number of years your ministry has worked with these CCACs. Many of them, whether it be Niagara or the St Catharines-Welland area, whether it be Sudbury-Manitoulin, whether it be the six CCACs in Toronto, whether it be Waterloo, Kingston, many areas of the province, those communities have identified need above your funding levels. They have been meeting that identified need of seniors and persons with disabilities. You have been funding them with year-end adjustments. Now you have said no, and in fact the meetings have happened between your ministry and these CCACs and they have been told they have to deliver service to the allocated budget. With your no-deficit law, what it means is that those services have to be cut.

Now, please, you can make a difference. You can commit today to go back and reconsider those budgets, to understand the community need and to fund to that base community need so that individuals are not being cut. I want to ask you—I raised a number of examples yesterday—if it was mom who was incontinent, who was only getting two baths a week and now the cuts that CCAC is forced to make mean she's only going to get one bath a week, is that acceptable to you, Minister?

**Hon Mr Clement:** As she may know, part of the \$1.2 billion of extra money that our government committed, over a multi-year period, to long-term care was \$551 million for home care and other long-term-care service, and \$264 million of that is going directly to CCACs for their funding allocations, so it would be inaccurate to say we are not adding to the base allocations of CCACs.

I would say to the honourable member that from our perspective it is not this Hobson's choice. It's not a choice of adding funds or cutting services. Our transfer partners have told us that part of the government's agenda has been to ensure that they deliver the services more efficiently, more focused to the patients who need the care, and cutting out some of the overhead, cutting out some of the waste and duplication. We will continue to pursue that with the CCACs as well.

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## VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Before we proceed, we have another former member in the members' gallery east, Mr Leo Jordan, the member for Lanark-Renfrew in the 35th and 36th Parliaments.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Minister of Finance and it has to do with the education tax credit program. We fear very much a fragmentation of the public education system and an undermining of the goals of universal access to education.

We've assumed all along that you must have conducted some fairly major analysis that would tell you where this will lead. We were surprised in our briefing by your officials to learn that, for the study they quote, they simply looked at the Internet and did a brief summary of some information they found on the Internet. Apparently they had no significant studies done to indicate what would happen to enrolment with this program. We understand you've assumed that nothing will happen to enrolment with the program.

Will you today, Minister, table the study and the research and the analysis you had conducted that showed you the impact of your program on enrolment in public schools, and will you give the House today and the public a synopsis of that major research you've obviously done so that we can understand how you arrived at no impact on enrolment?

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I thank the member opposite for the question. There were substantial pre-budget consultations, as I'm sure the member opposite knows. The finance committee of this House met for a couple of weeks in Ottawa, Thunder Bay, London and Toronto. There were about 349 people who were involved in the direct pre-budget consultations. Submissions were made in writing and in person with respect to this issue of equity in education. Certainly we'll hear more as the matter proceeds through the public hearings that are going to take place, and indeed more will be heard when the public consultations take place in terms of drafting the regulation concerning eligibility for the tax credit.

**Mr Phillips:** Listen, you have embarked Ontario on a road that will have a dramatic impact on public education. Surely to heaven you haven't embarked on that road without some significant research being done to tell you where the road leads. I say to you today, Minister, you've launched us on this and if you haven't done the research, Ontario wants you to answer for that. I say again, this is a major embarking down a road for education. I want you today to get up and table the research that shows you what the impact will be. If you haven't done that, I want to know why you haven't conducted the major research

to tell us what destruction you're going to do to public education. I want the research, and we want it today.

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** We can do better than that. We don't have to rely on theory, on speculation, on might-have-beens. We have the reality in this country—in British Columbia, in Alberta, in Saskatchewan, in Manitoba and in the province of Quebec. In all of those jurisdictions, they've moved forward with funding for children attending independent schools. That's already happened in this country. We know the reality of it.

For example, in Manitoba, independent school enrolment as a percentage of the total increased only marginally from 5% to 6.6% from 1999 to 2000. That's what's happened in the rest of Canada. That's what we anticipate happening in Ontario.

#### COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF ONTARIO

**Mr Wayne Wettklaufer (Kitchener Centre):** I have a question for the Minister of Health. I want to ask you about a situation that has been bothering me for several years, and I'm not able to get any answers. I know that our government is proud to push our agenda of accountability and transparency, but I believe that we should be expecting that policy to be honoured throughout all publicly funded or public-interest institutions in Ontario.

Minister, I am wondering how our government is reacting to the fact that as the Kitchener-Waterloo Record states that many of the "complaints investigated by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario since 1994" have been either "dismissed or handled behind closed doors." I've had personal experience with that. What are you going to do to ensure that the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario is accountable and part of a transparent health care system?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I want to thank the honourable member for Kitchener Centre for what is an excellent question. I think it has to be a fundamental touchstone of certainly this government that there be accountability and transparency in all aspects of public institutions, which not only includes government but also the College of Physicians and Surgeons and other independent or quasi-independent boards and agencies. We believe—and we should believe—that patients should have more access to information about their doctors and about the procedures that are part of doctor accountability. That's true for every profession, not just medical doctors.

I can tell the honourable member that in December 1999, the government launched an independent review of the College of Physicians and Surgeons complaint and discipline process. That review has been extremely comprehensive. It has looked at every aspect of complaints and discipline. We wanted to make sure that we could determine how the public interest was best served. We are seized with that information. We are seized now with the report and with the start of an action plan.

**Mr Wettklaufer:** I used to belong to a professional body and we had a disciplinary procedure through our regulatory body, and so do the teachers. They work very well.

I want to take this opportunity to give the members of this House an example of what we could do. US states presently have legislation making all physician complaints accessible by the public. One state in particular, Massachusetts, was the first in 1996 to put all disciplinary decisions, hospital sanctions, malpractice settlements and court actions on its Web site. Are we going to follow their leadership and hold our health care providers accountable through this example of transparency? If not, I'd like to know why not.

One of the excuses I always receive from the College of Physicians and Surgeons is that the health act doesn't permit them to disclose some information. The second part of my supplementary is: if the health act needs changing, will we change it?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Again, I think the touchstone should continue to be transparency and accountability. If we have to make legislative changes in order to get to a better definition and interpretation of the public interest, we should change legislation. There is an action plan that's in response to the independent review. We are taking a look at the action plan, quite frankly, to make sure it goes as far as it should rather than not going far enough.

I think that's the key to responding to this. It has to meet our commitment to transparency, meet our commitment to accountability, and certainly we are looking for public input on this from the member himself, other colleagues in the House, in the chamber and throughout the public as well. This is something that all of the public should have some thoughts on and should have an opportunity to provide some answers to.

#### COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** My question is to the Minister of Health as well. Your regulation regarding homemaking services is forcing community care access centres across the province to discharge thousands of clients who are now considered ineligible because of your restrictions. These clients are people who are capable of living independently but are unable to complete homemaking tasks necessary for them to stay in their homes: people like Yolanda and Lorraine from Sudbury, who have no family members or friends who can assist them on a regular basis. These people are being forced, by their circumstances and your regulation, out of their homes and into long-term-care facilities and low-cost retirement homes. Yolanda and Lorraine want to and can stay in their own home if you make an amendment to your regulation to allow community care access centres to provide homemaking skills to people who (1) are unable to perform their own homemaking skills or, (2) cannot afford homemaking skills.

Minister, will you make that amendment today, in order to keep Yolanda and Lorraine and many other

people in Ontario in similar situations in their own homes?

1450

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I thank the honourable member for the question. There are a number of things in play there. There are regulations in place when it comes to access to homemaking services that I believe were in place before we got into power. I would have to double-check on that, but certainly they are in place.

There are of course professional responsibilities of physicians to determine the appropriate place for a person. Is it in a long-term-care facility? Is it in a hospital? Is it for home care? These are clinical decisions rather than policy decisions, and they should be clinical decisions, quite frankly. Quite apart from that, we have our \$1.2-billion multi-year investment in long-term-care facilities. We just announced last week another 5,500 new beds that are being created in our province as part of our long-term-care strategy.

So all of these things are in place, or are going to be in place, and will provide parts of the answers to the honourable member's question.

**Mr Bartolucci:** That regulation was changed in 1999 under your mandate.

Minister, how does your collective government conscience allow you to avoid the question with rhetoric? On a daily basis, my office is getting phone calls from sick, elderly constituents: people like Yolanda, people like Lorraine, people who have lived and worked in Ontario for decades, paid their taxes and never asked for anything in return. These people do not want to be your sacrificial lambs for your government's tax cuts. These people are in the twilight of their lives. They are on fixed incomes and they never thought that their provincial government would turn its back on them, and this is exactly what you have done.

Minister, you have a letter from the CCAC Manitoulin-Sudbury, dated May 9, telling you that you are underfunding community care access centres across the province. Today, will you commit to the Manitoulin-Sudbury CCAC, and every CCAC across this province, that you will increase the base funding and that you will make an amendment to that regulation which will allow elderly, frail seniors to remain in their own home?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Of course the honourable member probably is aware that there are CCACs which are delivering that function. That's the more accurate way to describe that.

If the honourable member is raising a particular case to me, I mentioned to another honourable member that CCAC funding has increased over 72% since our government got into power. He mentioned the Sudbury-Manitoulin case, which I believe the other honourable member mentioned as well. If there is a particular problem, if they want to work with me for a value-for-money audit to make sure they are delivering the right services to the right people up to the best of our ability, we're open for business.

## PETITIONS

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas we believe that all education resources should be directed to our public schools, not private schools;

"Whereas Mike Harris has been attacking public education for six years, chopping \$1.8 billion from the classroom and now wants to pay parents to leave public education for private schools;

"Whereas we believe that a voucher plan for private schools is wrong, unfair and steals money from public education;

"Whereas we believe that these funds being invested in private schools would be better spent on rebuilding public education through such measures as bringing class sizes down to 20 students per class in the early years;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"Do not turn your back on Ontario's working families. Fight Mike Harris's voucher system for private schools; fight for smaller class sizes; fight for public education."

I will very proudly sign my name to this petition.

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the annual rent increase guideline for multi-unit residential dwellings in Ontario increases every year more than the rate of inflation and more than the cost-of-living increase for most tenants;

"Whereas no new affordable rental housing is being built by the private sector, despite the promise that the implementation of vacancy decontrol in June 1998 would encourage new construction;

"Whereas over 100,000 people are on the waiting list for social housing, homelessness has increased as a result of unaffordable rents and high rents are a direct cause of the national housing crisis;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement an immediate province-wide freeze on rents which will stop all guideline increases, above-guideline increases and increases to maximum rent for all sitting tenants in Ontario for a period of at least two years."

I support this petition.

### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr Wayne Wetlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. This is one of hundreds I'm receiving almost weekly.

"Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

"Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion, is best for their children; and

"Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as those practised in the Montessori and Waldorf schools are best for their children; and

"Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

"Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

"Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent schools as soon as possible."

I am more than happy to affix my signature to this.

#### PROSTATE CANCER

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** This is a petition to the Ontario Legislature.

"Whereas prostate cancer is the fourth leading cause of fatal cancer in Ontario;

"Whereas prostate cancer is the second leading cause of fatal cancer for males;

"Whereas early detection is one of the best tools for being victorious in our battle against cancer; and

"Whereas the early detection blood test known as PSA (prostate specific antigen) is one of the most effective tests at diagnosing early prostate cancer; and

"Whereas the Minister of Health's inaction is literally causing men to die needlessly;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to encourage the Minister of Health to have this test added to the list of services covered by OHIP, and that this be done immediately in order for us to save lives and beat prostate cancer."

I affix my signature to this petition.

#### EDUCATION

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** "Whereas Mike Harris and the Ministry of Education, with their new curriculum changes and cuts, have been failing our province's students;

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To cease cutting funds from the education system, and put back what was taken out to pay for textbooks for all grades, music, arts and physical education programs, and to hire more teachers;

"To immediately begin preparing elementary students for the secondary school curriculum (as the current students were not);

"Prepare for the doubling number of students in 2003 by working with colleges and universities now (space, teachers, admissions, marks etc);

"Abolish recent in-class time hike for teachers, which doesn't allow proper time to prepare lessons or volunteer their time to extracurricular activities;

"Eliminate the teacher adviser group and the teacher adviser program;

"Simply, to listen to the students of Ontario and to stop ignoring them. After all, they are the ones these changes are affecting."

I support this petition as well.

#### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

"Whereas many believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or other religions, is best for their children; and

"Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as practised in the Montessori and Waldorf schools are best for their children; and

"Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

"Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

"Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of their tuition fees paid for that education;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent schools as soon as possible."

I'm submitting this on behalf of a number of constituents, for instance, Jennifer Slump, and I'll sign that petition now.

1500

#### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** I have a petition with approximately 5,000 signatures.

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:....

"Three years ago, recommendations made by the Health Services Restructuring Commission (HSRC) were confirmed by the district health council, which resulted in the merger of Picton, Belleville, Trenton and Bancroft hospitals. Unfortunately, this merger exempted Picton from remaining within a rural classification, in accord-

ance with the new framework guidelines established for northern and rural health care.

"Upon merger, Picton was to maintain 36 active treatment beds, with an additional six sub-acute care beds available by 2003. This is no longer the case. Picton is facing further reductions due to its reclassification from rural to partially urban. Why? Is driving 35 to 40 kilometres one way to reach medical care not far enough?... We are a large county and for many residents access to medical care is precarious and daunting...."

"The provincial government has stepped in and overruled the review of the rural and northern framework, resulting in our community being recognized as partially urban and subject to further downsizing. What gives this governing body the right to overrun the people who were first responsible for the origin of our community hospital? We must not forget the support of those organizations such as the Women's Institute, service clubs, Ladies Auxiliary ... churches and the many individual bequests.

"Our hospital was built in 1959 and dedicated to the memory of our servicemen. We must now join together and support the war being faced by our local hospital."

We call upon the Minister of Health and the Premier, Mr Harris, to realize "that the reductions being enforced upon our community hospital should not become reality." We must preserve "our doctors, our services, our outpatient clinics that are so essential...."

I am pleased to add my signature to this petition.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments; and

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors, and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials; and

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, the Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

I am pleased to attach my signature to this petition.

#### SOCIAL AUDIT

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has undertaken a massive reform of the way social service programs are managed and delivered in this province; and

"Whereas the government's language, actions and policies over the last six years have reinforced the worst kind of stereotypes about people on social assistance without offering Ontarians any proof that the policies they've put in place are meeting the needs of those whose circumstances have forced them to seek temporary assistance from Ontario's social safety net; and

"Whereas this government, when challenged on how well their Ontario Works programs are working, points to welfare caseload numbers as their one and only measurement of success or failure; and

"Whereas a social audit would determine how this government's policies are impacting on low-income children and families and allow for enhancements to improve the well-being, employability and economic security of individuals and families in need;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the government of Ontario conduct a social audit of its Ontario Works program."

This is going across the province. This was sent to me by the Ottawa West End Legal Services, and I'm very pleased to add my name to this petition.

#### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre):** I have a petition here on behalf of residents of the Minister of Transportation's riding, and I am pleased to present it on his behalf.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

"Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion, is best for their children; and

"Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as those practised in the Montessori and Waldorf schools are best for their children; and

"Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

"Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

"Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent schools as soon as possible."

These are from people from Mount Hope, Hamilton, Ancaster, Caledonia.

## MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING

## OPPOSITION DAY

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):**

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current level of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) services in Ottawa is the lowest of any major urban area in the province and waiting lists for these services exceed 7,000 patients and seven months;

"Whereas the delays experienced by patients waiting for these services are potentially harmful to their health and often result in the mental anguish of uncertainty, needless suffering and financial burden;

"Whereas Ottawa-area hospitals have submitted proposals for increased MRI services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Health be directed to take immediate action and provide sufficient funding to resolve the alarming backlog of patients waiting for MRI scans at Ottawa hospitals."

I affix my signature.

## ELECTRICITY GENERATING STATION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further petitions. The Chair recognizes the member for Mississauga South.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** Thank you, with deep gratitude, Mr Speaker. I appreciate this opportunity. I am presenting this petition on behalf of Gary Carr, the member for Oakville—the Speaker—and myself as the member for Mississauga South. It reads as follows:

"Petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas Sithe Energies Canadian Development Ltd is actively pursuing the development of an 800 MW electricity generating facility; and

"Whereas the 14-hectare parcel of land on which the station is proposed is located on the east side of Winston Churchill Boulevard in the Southdown industrial district of Mississauga;

"Whereas Sithe has stated its commitment to an open dialogue with communities where it has a presence and to being responsive to the concerns of the same; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has a responsibility to ensure the safety of Ontario citizens and to determine how this facility will impact those who live in its immediate, surrounding area,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario direct the Ministry of the Environment to undertake a formal environmental assessment of the Sithe project."

I am happy to add my signature to this petition.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The Chair recognizes the member for Parkdale-High Park.

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** It's my pleasure to rise on behalf of my party on this opposition day about the commitment this party has—and this government has failed to provide—in favour of public education, that it has put forward, to the detriment of every child in public education in this province, schemes to give incentives with public money—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. Either you need unanimous consent to take the place of Mr McGuinty or Mr McGuinty has to be here to move that motion.

**Mr Kennedy:** I seek unanimous consent to speak in place of Mr McGuinty.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is it agreed? It is not agreed.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** It is agreed.

1510

**Mr Kennedy:** The resolution to be debated this afternoon, an opportunity that we are providing through our opposition day, is, that in the opinion of this House, the government should make reducing class sizes in our public schools to a real cap of 20 students per class in junior kindergarten through grade 3 its top education priority and withdraw its plan for private school vouchers.

This is a vital opportunity for the people of this province to finally be heard. After six years of this government attacking public education, they have finally made clear what their real agenda is. They have—

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. Mr Kennedy has moved opposition day number 3, and now the Chair recognizes the member for York South. Debate?

**Mr Kennedy:** It is vital that the people of this province take this opportunity to talk back finally to this government, to a government that has not been in any way responsive or responsible when it comes to the public education system, but instead has found and has put forward for us a lazy option, an option essentially of giving up on the public education system.

Yesterday at our public meeting in my riding of Parkdale-High Park we had people from, for example, Etobicoke Centre. Nativity of Our Lord school, for example, is inviting the Minister of Labour from this House and says to him, "Come down to our school. Explain to us how \$300 million for private school vouchers is going to make our school that has portables, that has decrepit conditions," quoting that parent, "but a wonderful educational opportunity"—how will that become better because you have decided, in your government, to take money away and put it instead into private school vouchers?

The thing that this government needs to be able to—

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just want to go on the record that I received no such invitation.

**The Acting Speaker:** That's not a point of order. The Chair recognizes the member for York South.

**Mr Kennedy:** The minister will be receiving his invitation, and I know that the families—I think he'd better check with his office, because the families and the parents of that community have said they have tried to meet with that member and have been unable to.

Perhaps this member knew that this is what the government was up to, and this is a challenge we've put. I wrote to each individual member at the beginning of the year. I wrote again last week and said, "If you have the confidence of this policy, please take it on as legislators and explain it to the people who are in public schools." For those who have done it, I commend them. I would say, though, for the government as a whole, this is your obligation as legislators. You now have a policy. You have said—and the people of Ontario need to understand what they're saying. They are saying, "Here is a wide-open exemption." Here is something that is not about fairness, it's not about a particular type of school; it's about any kind of private school whatsoever in this province receiving an incentive. The family's getting an incentive of \$3,500.

What the government has to tell their constituents and the province as a whole is that no other jurisdiction does this. No state, no province, gives private school vouchers. The other thing that this government may not wish the public of this province to understand is that in the United States, at least, those jurisdictions put this on a ballot. They had referendums, 35 of them last fall. Every single time that vouchers and tax credits were put to the public, they were defeated, because in the light of day this government's proposals become obvious. They become clear for what they really mean. What they really mean is finally deducting and taking things away from the students in public education.

In the next few days it will become clear that what the Premier said in the House today is no validation, that in fact the funding for public education has been reduced by this government, has been reduced this year and has been reduced in every single year it has been in office.

That is not substantially the case. The case for public education is the case that has been there and that we need for the future about the merits of public education. But there is no question that this is a backdoor attack that allows people, in fact encourages them, to leave public education.

The mechanics around the dollars are this: for each student that this government now encourages for the first time, the first government anywhere in North America, to leave—"Here's some money if you leave"—for every student who leaves, they take the funds with them, and the essence of public education is not about that self-interest kind of thing that has been encouraged to parents and to families. Instead, in public education we have students who are maybe \$1,200 students. They are the

students who come ready to learn, who have had all the advantages, who got the ability to do very well, and they found a home in public education. But alongside of them are students who need some extra attention, who need to be learning, who need to be taking advantage of the extra services that we can provide in public education, and those students may for one year, for two years, cost a lot more. The reason we have public education is to pool those opportunities for those students, to make sure that no matter what their background is, no matter what their economic situation, we're allowing them to have excellence in the same school because we're able to put those children together.

If this proposal is allowed to take precedence over the needs of public education, we won't be able to offer that in future. We won't have sufficient resources to say, as we in this party want to say, that public education has to be about excellence for all. This party opposite, the government party, would encourage people to leave public education, to essentially have \$3,500 of public funds to go to private school, where there are no conditions, where there are no restrictions, where there is no Soviet-style government of this particular nature with its heavy hand on the schools, on the teachers, on the principals, restricting their ability to deliver innovation and responsiveness to the people who are here.

I think in all of our communities parents are starting to become alive to the fact that this government has stolen control of their local schools away from them, and in putting forward this opposition resolution, we think they can take it back. The way to take it back is not just to be against this ham-fisted policy, this lazy policy that the government, until forced to, has been afraid to put to public hearings. We understand they made a very small concession. They're still afraid to take it to their own ridings; they're still afraid to take it around the province.

We call upon the public to contact the clerk of the standing committee on finance to tell them that they want to be heard. Today is the day that the people of Ontario have to stand up for public education, because a large number of their representatives are patently afraid to do so, are not willing to stand up for public education.

The way we think to fight for public education is to improve it. There need to be things done with the \$300 million and the commitment that this government is not prepared to put into public education. We need lower class sizes. This government came in and increased class sizes, cut funds, took away teachers, overloaded the system. We think our students deserve better.

We proposed in our plan for public education to make 20 the maximum in primary grades in this province, and we think that initiative by itself will pay for itself, but it does take commitment. It costs \$350 million to ensure an excellent education for our students in the lower grades. That's where our priority should be. That's where the focus of this House should be: how can we make the young children of this community get their literacy, get their numeracy, have that taught to them in the lower grades, get the individualized attention that the taxpaying

citizens of this province have every right to expect but for some reason the members opposite want to deny them, don't want to give them full value for their tax dollars?

We have heard in some of the petitions read by the members opposite that somehow this is giving parents their money back. There are people in this House, people in this province, who don't participate with the education system because they don't have any kids in the system. I, for example, have a preschool child. But it doesn't matter. We all invest in public education. We don't give refunds for any purpose, because the value of public education is such that we all have to invest in it.

This government, at a time when it had \$14 billion in increased revenue, has cut funding for education by \$1.8 billion. With this initiative, with this idea that somehow they are going to encourage people with public funds to go to private schools, they stand exposed as lacking that elemental commitment to making sure not only of lower class sizes but that excellence in education gets shared around.

**1520**

We say, for example, lighthouse programs are what this government should be focusing on: to take the good programs that are taking place in schools, to fund that to make sure that they are learned by other programs, so that other places can have the advantages of the very significant excellence that already exists in the system; to take the teachers who have made that happen, in math or in special education or in some of the inner-city schools or some of the rural schools and pay, as a government, to make that occur all around the province. Take advantage of the fact that we have a public education system on both the separate and secular side, and we can make those systems even better.

We have also said we would pay to see master teachers, to see people mentor the new teachers to make sure that we don't have what this government has handed us today for public education: 4,400 teachers who left last year for reasons other than retirement. They voted with their feet to say this isn't a jurisdiction where they can practise the profession of teaching—of inculcating among our young the ability to be part of this society, to be successful in society, to have good paying jobs in this society—because the government has given up on the system.

We see that most clearly in the initiative today when the government says that they can continue to deprive children of the essentials, of textbooks, for example. This year, each of the members opposite should be back in their riding at some point and describing to them why there aren't going to be any textbooks available. A new curriculum in grade 11: there will not be money to buy the books for most of the subjects, because the government has other priorities. It thinks tax cuts are important, it thinks tax breaks and vouchers for private schools are important, but it doesn't think that books and teachers and attention to students on an individualized basis matter, and that's fundamentally what we're here

today to speak about. It's to put on the record, to have the public of Ontario see first-hand, where the commitment and the priorities are of all members of this House.

The tax voucher system—the private school voucher—allows this government to be harmful to all publicly funded schools: to take \$6,800 out—after they've paid their first \$300 million—to actually have the audacity to have a system where they will benefit from the difference between the \$6,800 and the \$3,500 of public funds they're prepared to give people to take their kids to private schools. This is a means, eventually, after losing us at least \$300 million out of the public purse, to continue to take money from schools. The Premier said it could be \$700 million. Other people have estimated that with even small growth increments, it could be much, much higher. That money will leave the public system but, perversely, a good part of the money won't even go this special, rarefied route to parents. It will go instead to this government to use for its tax cuts, to use for its other priorities that don't include children.

Fundamentally, this is about changing an agreement we've had in this province for decades. And more fundamentally, it's about removing the rug from under any reasonable plan for the future, for this province to move forward in the 21st century. If there is one thing we can do as a jurisdiction to confer some benefit, to do something positive, it's what we do in those 12 and 13 years during public education. The attack the government has made on that system has been regrettable and reprehensible, but now it becomes comical for the government to have any pretence that they believe in that kind of future where everyone is offered a chance of excellence.

Instead, they have made it very clear: if you want to pack your bags and leave the public education system, if you want to join the Conservative Party and take a lazy approach, rather than hunker down and fix things and make them better and improve and provide the things that people need, if you just exit, the Premier is saying to us today that the Conservative Party will pay you to do that. That's not a role for a public official in this province, that's not a role for a Premier, and that's not leadership on public education.

Instead we have our leader, Dalton McGuinty, providing very clear leadership, very clear policies, very clear options for this government to take up today. Just as we did when we put forward a peace plan last December, we want to see peace in our high schools. We said to this government, "We've got a plan. We acknowledge you're the government of the day. Take this plan and put your name on it. Bring peace to the schools. You can have some of your badly thought-out policies, but at least give extracurricular activities back." For 240 days this government refused to do that. For 240 days they showed us their true priorities and instead, finally, lamely, reluctantly, dragged to the finish line, and at the end of the year they considered they might be partly responsible for a situation that they initiated.

Today I hope to hear the members opposite change their minds. This is not the kind of thing that any single

party has the right to do. This government has no mandate. This government said opposite things a year ago. This government has no right to trifl with 2.1 million kids in the public education system.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I rise in support of this resolution. I just want to say at the outset, I thought it was interesting that the Liberal education critic talked about the Liberals providing clear policy, because—I don't know—if you listen to what's going on when it comes to discussions they're having with people in support of private education, they tell them behind closed doors that they support it, and then when it comes to talking to people who want to support public education, they are saying that they're going to support public education. The Liberals, as always, are falling down on both sides of the issue, and what's interesting, all at the same time. It amazes me. It always amazes me that the Liberals can get away with that.

I want to say up front, as a New Democrat and for the rest of the caucus, that we are clear on this issue of public versus private school funding. We are opposed to this voucher tax credit system that the government is proposing in this year's budget, which will allow people who choose to send their children to private schools to get what is in effect a voucher at the end of the tax year. The government wants to say this is not a voucher. The only difference in what the government is proposing is that if you had an actual voucher, the parent would get the \$3,500 in September, but because it's a tax credit, they'll get it back as a tax credit in the month of March. Rather than the voucher, you're getting a tax credit, but it all works out to the same thing; rather than being paid in September, you're being paid in March.

In the time that I have in this debate, I want to say a couple of things when it comes to public education and where we have seen policy in this province go over the last six years. I want people to think back to about the summer of 1995, after the Conservative government came to power in June of that year. If you remember, Mr Snobelen was appointed as the Minister of Education, and at that time in the summer of 1995, in speaking to bureaucrats at the Ministry of Education—and this was caught on tape, because they had videotaped his speech to give back to the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Education—Mr Snobelen said, "We will create a crisis in education as the backdrop to be able to do the fundamental changes that we want to make in the education system as Conservatives."

I say, as I said back then, that if anything should have happened to Mr Snobelen at the time, he should have had to resign as the Minister of Education on the basis of having divulged what was a cabinet discussion, because I believe that has been the policy of the government when it comes to education and health care over the last number of years since they've come to power.

If you severely underfund the system, if you create the crisis, you create the condition by which you're able to open up the doors to make the kinds of changes that this government wants to make. So let's look at how they've created a crisis.

One of the first things the government did was change the whole way we fund schools in Ontario. There used to be a time when funding for schools was split about 50-50, depending where you lived, between local school boards and the provincial government. It was a partnership. The school boards would go out and raise, by the way of municipal levy, money to be able to pay for education at the local level, and the province kicked in about 50% in order to make this function work. The important point is that there was a combination and a balance, I would say, between local control at the school board level and provincial guidelines by way of the province.

As a result, the province, because it put in a part of the money, had a say in determining what the curriculum was and in making sure there were provincial standards set across the province. By way of the school board being able to raise its own funds, they were able to deal with local issues. For example, in our communities of northern Ontario, it allowed the school boards to offer French immersion programs in the way that made sense for our communities. It allowed them to introduce programs that dealt with the environmental issues of our particular part of the province. It also allowed the school boards to deal with aboriginal programs to make sure that we try to sensitize young children growing up in non-aboriginal communities about the realities of what First Nations people have to deal with on a day-to-day basis. Those were some of the things you were able to do at the local level, because the school board trustees had taxing powers and also the ability to determine what was going to be done inside the school year.

The government then said, "We want to get away from that." What they did was, they not only took over complete control of education, but they changed the way that financing was done in education at the primary and secondary levels. What they did was basically to say from now on schools would be given money on the basis of the square footage they have in the schools. Now what you've got is this ridiculous situation where we're not really looking at how many kids are in the school to determine how much funding has to happen at the local school level; we're looking at the square footage in the school for the number of pupils. As a result of that, we have some great inadequacies when it comes to the amount of money available to certain schools to deliver programs.

**1530**

The second thing was that by taking over complete control of education, the province of Ontario basically is now able to call all the shots. The school boards are still there, although there are fewer of them, which in itself is not a bad thing, but they've basically neutered the power of the school board trustees to deal with local issues. Now the province barks and the school boards have to say, "Yap, yap, how high?" I don't see that as being necessarily a good thing for education.

They have created a crisis in education, first, by changing the way we fund schools; second, by taking

complete control of the schools by way of provincial control; and third, they've picked a huge fight with the teaching profession in Ontario. Since 1995 the Tories have worn like a badge of honour the number of battles they've had against the teaching profession in this province. I think that has led to a great disservice, not only to teachers in our communities but also to students and parents who see teachers as others who are trying to go out there and do the best they can in the system we have. As a result, we now see fewer and fewer young people choosing to enrol in teachers' college to go into the teaching profession because they've watched Mike Harris for the last five, six or seven years bash teachers at every occasion. They say, "Why should I go into a profession where I'm constantly getting bashed? Maybe I should go do something else."

The figures now are clearly showing that only about 50% of the number of people are enrolling in educational programs that lead to a teaching degree today that there were a couple of years ago, a complete drop by half the number of people going into the teaching profession. As a result, we will have a teaching shortage in this province in the not-too-distant future.

So the government has gone in and has underfunded the system. They've cut almost \$2 billion out of the public school system. They've taken complete control of education. They've neutered the power of the school boards and the school board trustees. They've changed the funding formula to reflect footage rather than the number of pupils who are in the system. They have created a backdrop by which we are now starting to see failure of our public school system to a degree we've never seen it before.

I would also argue that on a lot of the school testing issues, where the government has come up with province-wide testing, which is not a bad idea in itself, they've set that up to fail. I've talked to a number of people in the teaching profession who were responsible for grading the provincial exams, who were hired by the Ministry of Education to do it. I'm being told that in a number of cases, when they went out to do the grading, they were told to change the grading after the grading was done. I think the government is trying to demonstrate that there's this huge problem in the system of public education and that somehow or other we've go to fix it.

We find out in the budget of the year 2001 what the government has planned, and that is that they want to give Ontarians, as they say, the "choice" between sending their children to the public system of education or a private system: religiously based or non-religiously based private schools. I think that's really dangerous for a number of reasons. In the time I've got left, I want to tell you why I'm opposed to it and why I think most Ontarians are opposed to it. There are some people who support this, no question, but they are not in the majority.

First of all, parents who choose to take their children out of the public system and send them to a private system are doing so based on their religious beliefs, by and large. That's the biggest reason why children go into

the private system. There are some Montessori schools, which is a bit of a different issue, but on the question of the majority of private schools out there, most of them are faith-based schools. So they're choosing to take them out of the public system and put them into the private system on the basis of their faith. I understand that as a parent, but I believe you can do that within the public system. If we, as parents, want our children to be raised in our faith, which is perfectly acceptable and should be encouraged, we need to figure out a way to make that happen within the public system. I would argue it's not by allowing parents to opt out of the public system into a private one that we should be doing it. What we should be saying is, "How do we go to our public school systems, both French and English, and say, 'I want to be able to make sure that my child is raised in my religious belief and has a component of their education that is based on faith.'" You can do that within the public system, but instead the government chooses not to do that and would rather divert the children, by way of choice of the parents, into the private system.

I believe you can accommodate faith within the public system. I don't believe the best way to do that is in an entirely private system. By allowing the child to move from the public system into the private system, there are a number of questions that have to be asked. Number one: once the child goes into the private system, what assurance do we have as taxpayers—because we are the ones who are going to be paying by way of our tax dollars—that those children, when they go into the private system, will be following some sort of public curriculum that is province-wide?

We know that faith is going to be part of the education. I understand that, I accept it, I respect it and I encourage it. But on the question of education, I want to make sure as a taxpayer that at the end of the day the children who would end up in the private system, who are there now or would go in the future, have basically a requirement to follow our provincial guidelines when it comes to curriculum, making sure as well that there are certain provincial guidelines that are followed when it comes to issues of discrimination and a whole host of other issues.

There's no mechanism to make that happen. You could make it happen, I would argue, if we decided to do that. But creating a whole other basic system of education, a private system to get there, is not a good use of taxpayers' dollars. I would argue: make that a combination within the public system. We should be trying to strengthen the public system so that we can give our children the very best education possible so they can go out and compete in tomorrow's economy.

I don't think that fragmenting the system to a greater degree by way of increasing private schools is going to be a way to strengthen education overall. What it does, by the Premier's own admission and by the minister's own admission in letters they wrote to us, wrote to the Liberal opposition and wrote to the public on this issue is that when you're giving somebody a tax credit—I don't

care what the amount is—you're taking money away from the public system to offset and pay into the private system. It is taking money away from the much needed dollars that are necessary to strengthen our public system.

What I would argue is simply this: if we as a Legislature decide we want to encourage the ability of parents to choose a way of making sure that the faith the family has when it comes to religious beliefs is ingrained, not only in what they do at home but to a certain extent in what happens at school, we should be looking at how to do that in a public system. I would argue against doing it in a private system.

In the few minutes I have left, the other thing that I would say is that the government, both in the 1995 and the 1999 elections, never ran on a ticket that said, "Vote for us and we'll give you private education." In fact, they ran opposed to that. My leader Howard Hampton in a leaders' debate in the 1999 election put that question squarely to Mike Harris and Mike Harris said, "I will never support funding the private system." He was very clear about that.

Ontarians made a choice. They chose to elect, freely and democratically, the Conservative government by 44% of the legislative votes in Ontario in the last election, but they did so in the belief there was not going to be private schools. I argue there is no mandate for the Conservative government to move on this initiative. I believe that either should be put to a referendum for the people of Ontario or the issue put off to the next election.

If the Conservatives believe there should be private education, or the Liberals believe there should be private education, depending which day of the week it is because some days they're in favour and some days they're against—when they walk into a religious-based school or they're being lobbied by people who send their kids to private school, they say, "Yeah, don't worry, we're in favour," but when they go out and talk to the public they say a different thing—at least the parties would be able to state clearly what their position is in an election.

The voters would then have to make a choice. If they believe, as a majority, that there should be funding for private schools, let the voters decide. That's the way the democratic system should work. I don't believe it's right for a government to do these huge shifts of public policy when they don't have the mandate to do it.

You should shelve this whole issue till the next election. If you really feel strongly about it, put it in the next campaign as part of your campaign literature. Maybe then, if people understand, they will have a choice. My guess is that the vast majority of Ontarians would vote against such a proposal and would sustain any party that stands for public education. With that, I thank you very much for having this time in debate.

1540

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** Thank you very much for the opportunity to discuss a very important new initiative of our government. I thank Minister Flaherty and Minister Ecker for the leadership they have shown in bringing forth the initiative we've talked about, the tax credit issue.

Over the next five years, we propose to phase in a partial tax credit for parents of children at independent schools. Let me make it clear right off the bat: this is not a voucher system. There is a difference. Once again, even the resolution put forth by the opposition clearly shows they do not understand the difference between a voucher and a tax credit. Instead, they've dwelt today on fearmongering and speculation.

Let's also make it clear that this is not a new initiative for any province.

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):** Yes, it is.

**Mr Dunlop:** No, it's not. All of the western provinces as well as Quebec have shown leadership in this. We have started this in Ontario and we have shown leadership.

We are not funding private schools. We are giving a tax credit to hard-working Ontario families. This is all about expanding choice. It means more choices for parents and more choices for students. For years, the Ontario government has heard from parents who want their children educated in their own culture and religion. Even in my riding, which is primarily a two-board system, I continually get letters at all times from parents wanting some more choice. Some parents feel that the only way to do that is to send them to an independent school, but for many families the cost is overwhelming. Everyone is not wealthy. That's what the fearmongering I am hearing from the other side is on the tax credit issue—that it's only for the wealthy. You know full that's not the truth.

The Ontario government believes that the time has come to address the concerns of the parents. We continue to strongly support the public education system. In fact, our funding for public education has increased to \$13.86 billion this year. I believe that shows a strong commitment to public education. For the 2000-01 year, we have increased our investment in public education by more than \$360 million. Since our government came into office in 1995, education spending in Ontario has increased from \$12.9 billion to \$13.86 billion in this next school year.

As the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education, I have visited a number of new schools in Ontario. Just in new pupil places alone, beginning in 1998-99, there was \$132 million spent on new pupil places, new construction in Ontario. For this fiscal year, that number has gone up to \$315 million. I have visited schools and done some sod turning at schools such as St Mark Catholic school in Stoney Creek, a beautiful new structure for the citizens of that area; the Holy Jubilee school in Maple in Vaughan-King-Aurora; and the Canadian Martyrs Catholic school in Penetanguishene. These are state-of-the-art schools, with state-of-the-art air conditioning and ventilating systems, with fantastic gymnasiums, with wonderful sound systems and stages for all types of activities that can take place in the schools.

But again, I want to stress how much more money has been spent just in new pupil places and making these

places a more healthy environment—a \$109-million increase in funding this year over last year for new pupil places.

At the same time, we have many initiatives in place to support and improve public education. We are taking additional steps to improve choices for parents and for students. In the budget announced earlier this month, we indicated our plan to support parental choice with a new equity in education tax credit. Subject to approval by the Legislature, it will begin in the 2002 taxation year. It will give parents a tax credit of up to \$3,500, phased in over five years, for fees they pay to send their children to independent schools in Ontario. We will be consulting with the public on the best way to implement this partial tax credit. The government will work to identify how to establish eligibility for this credit.

I want to make it perfectly clear again that this is not a voucher system. This is about expanding choices for parents. It is something parents have demanded for years. The need to address this concern once again became apparent during this government's pre-budget consultations. That's why we do pre-budget consultations: to find out what the hard-working families of Ontario want. Other provinces support independent schools while maintaining their commitment to publicly funded education. We recognize that it is possible and desirable to support families who choose to send their students to independent schools while we continue to invest in public education.

I want to answer a concern that has been raised earlier in this House. No one is proposing to take one penny out of the public education system. Our government supports public education through a vast range of initiatives. For example, we have increased funding and other supports for students with special needs in Ontario. In fact, last year we increased spending on special education by 12%. That was the third year in a row we've increased resources in this vital area. In my own two school boards, the two largest school boards, the Simcoe County District School Board and the Simcoe-Muskoka Catholic District School Board, those increases went up by 25%, some of the largest increases in the province. I was especially pleased, before I was even involved as the PA to education, to work strongly with Minister Ecker's office to voice the concerns of the local boards and of the local parent councils to try to have those dollars increased.

We're entirely committed not just to introducing higher standards in our publicly funded education system, but to making sure the standards are met. To improve quality and accountability, we have established a more rigorous curriculum with higher standards. We have brought in standardized testing to measure students' progress. We want to assure parents and students across Ontario that teachers have the up-to-date knowledge and skills needed to help students reach their full potential. That is why we are implementing a comprehensive teacher testing program, subject to final passage by this Legislature.

We know as well that parent involvement is crucial to raising students' performance and achieving higher

educational standards. If parents want to make the right decisions and choices about their children's education, they need information. They need avenues for participation. We have created understandable report cards so that parents can see and evaluate exactly how their children are doing in school. I haven't heard a lot of criticism on this from the opposition.

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** We like the report cards.

**Mr Dunlop:** I understand that. I think they're excellent, and I've heard nothing but compliments on that.

We have also worked hard to strengthen parental involvement in education through our school councils. School councils now have the right to make recommendations to the principal or school board on any matter. I want to say to you as a local member, I did take Mr Kennedy up on his challenge about going out and visiting schools. In fact, as PA I've really enjoyed visiting schools. I've met with a number of school councils and listened to the concerns that parents have. The one thing that has really impressed me about the school council people I have met with is their knowledge of the system, their knowledge on student-focused funding and on the different programs and initiatives our government has. Yes, there are concerns out there, but as a representative I try to listen to them and voice their concerns and take them to the minister.

But one thing I want to say, something that I wanted to talk about or briefly mention, is, not having been in school for a number of years, since my two children were there, I want to compliment the schools on the discipline and the school spirit I see in the schools. I visited some high schools, for example, like St Theresa's in Midland and Midland Secondary School and Orillia District Collegiate and Vocational Institute under the principalship of Rick Beer. I want to compliment them on the types of schools they are running.

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Principals and boards, of course, will be required to seek the views of school councils in a number of key program and policy areas. They will have to report back on actions taken in response to school council recommendations.

We are also providing parents with a stronger voice at the provincial level. We have recently expanded the Ontario Parent Council to include six regional representatives chosen by school councils from across our province. I want to say that I've met with a few of these representatives already and I think the Ontario Parent Council will be a very valuable asset to the provincial government.

In January of this year, we announced the creation of a Task Force on Effective Schools. The task force will recommend ways to improve board management practices, planning systems, school improvement plans and teacher excellence. The examples I have cited prove our education commitment, not just to publicly funded education but also to supporting parental involvement and parental choice.

One aspect of parental choice relates to the very personal cultural and religious decisions that may go into sending one's children to an independent school. I'll tell you, as a representative, since this announcement I've had a number of letters from parents. Some are concerned about the tax credit system, but most of the letters are in full support of our initiative.

Every student in Ontario deserves the best education possible. For some families, personal, cultural and religious values may lead them to placing their children in independent schools.

Our equity in education tax credits supports choices in education. In a healthy and respectful way, it runs parallel to our commitment to improving student achievement, raising standards and making Ontario's education system the best in the world.

In closing, I want to make one slight comment on something that the education critic from the opposition party had mentioned. He referred to us as a Soviet-style government. On one hand, I hear the opposition saying to us that we want to privatize everything. They're continually complaining about privatizing, as though they hate the private sector. On the other hand, they're referring to us as a Soviet-style government. There's something wrong there. In a Soviet-style government, they take away from the privatizing and there is no privatization. So I'd like to correct him on that and I hope he can refer to us as something other than a Soviet-style government, because certainly this is a Soviet-style opposition.

I want in closing to also thank a number of schools that I visited recently. I want to thank principal Alison Bradshaw, from the David H. Church school, that I visited last week in constituency week; principal Mary Hick and her staff at the Marchmount public school; and principal Larry Morley at the Coldwater public school.

I want to take this opportunity to say that I am opposed to the resolution. I want to pass it on to my colleagues for further comment.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** It's difficult for me to speak briefly about something I care about so deeply, so maybe I'll just spend my few minutes saying why I care so much.

I believe that there is an enormous strength to the public school system, and an enormous obligation. That obligation is to its inclusiveness. There's been a lot of talk about choice that's provided through this tax credit, the choice to opt out. That is a choice that people now have. But the great commitment of the public school system is to provide a system in which no one is shut out. Beyond that, the great challenge of public education has been to achieve educational excellence in offering that universal education to every child in a way that attempts to meet the needs of each individual.

It sounds like a corny 1970s kind of goal; I know that. It is a hugely ambitious goal. It's a goal that we fall short of in a great many ways. But it's also a goal that we have come closer to achieving than anybody might have believed possible, or at least we had until the Mike Harris government got hold of our education system.

I like to think of the great dream of public education as having been advanced step by step, rather like taking a giant boulder and pushing it very, very slowly up a mountain. Then Mike Harris came along with funding cuts, withdrawing support for special education that meets the needs of those individual children in many cases, putting in place restrictive barriers that shut people out even though the government puts them forward in the name of standards. The Mike Harris government has sent that dream of public education rolling all the way down to the bottom of the mountain, and now, with this tax credit, they are prepared to strangle public education even further.

Yes, the \$300 million to \$500 million to \$700 million that will be given in tax credits could have made an enormous difference to public education in achieving its goals, but this tax credit also withdraws money directly by providing an incentive to take people out of public education. It provides an incentive to withdraw the people, and with every student withdrawn from public education, the public education system loses about \$6,500. The Mike Harris government has to be congratulated on having finally found a way to take the money it wants out of public education and achieve its goal of privatization, all with one seemingly simple tax credit.

The other huge challenge of public education stems directly from its commitment to inclusiveness. Its challenge is how it can demonstrate respect for the many differences in cultural background in the students who are in our schools, how it can foster the values of mutual understanding and respect which I truly believe are values as important in this multicultural society of ours as reading, writing and arithmetic, which seem to be the focus exclusively of this government's talk about values and standards.

I believe our schools have been enormously successful in bringing together people of different backgrounds, and I believe that is the only effective way we can build that kind of mutual understanding and respect among people of different backgrounds. The tax credit that Mike Harris is introducing will destroy all of that. I'm absolutely convinced of that. It will destroy it by ushering in an era of fragmentation and segregation that no one would have believed was possible.

That's what breaks my heart: where this Mike Harris government has inexorably been taking public education, and this penultimate blow that it is about to deliver. But what makes me truly angry is to see how this Mike Harris government has, from the time it came into office, continuously set the public education system up for failure so that it could indeed move further and further on its privatization agenda.

I don't have time in the time that I have now to go over the history of what this government has done from day one to create the crisis, to attack the people who provide public education, to create the environment in which they believed they could find public support for introducing private school vouchers that will destroy

public education. I'll have an opportunity to do that tomorrow.

But I want to conclude this very brief participation in today's debate by recognizing that what will be lost if Mike Harris and his government proceed with this tax credit is the legacy of the past 150 years of public education in Ontario: the legacy of Egerton Ryerson, who truly believed that every child, regardless of wealth, should have a right to an equality of education. Mike Harris wants to create two-tiered education in which public education is a second-class system for people whose parents can't afford something better. If Mike Harris proceeds with this, it will be a truly shameful legacy of the Mike Harris government.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I'm quite happy to stand up and support the Liberal motion of the day. I agree with most of the things that have been said by the previous speakers, Gerard Kennedy and others; we'll hear Mr McGuinty shortly. But I've got a few problems with the way the Liberals present these issues, and I want to speak about two or three if I can.

The first one is, the motion speaks to funding money to cap the primary grades, which is a very laudable thing to do. I think it's a good thing to be able, as a government, to fund capping of primary grades. Capping the grades at earlier years to that kind of number of 20 or so is a good thing, because students, of course, learn better in that kind of environment, and teachers are able to teach better. No problem.

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I think the problem is that it will cost a couple of hundred million; some say \$200 million, some say \$300 million, but it's in the area of \$200 million to \$300 million. My question to the Liberals is, where are you going to find the money for your initiative? You've got to speak to that. You can't just say, "We're going to reduce the debt, we're going to keep tax cuts, we're going to fund new programs, more for education, more for health," but at the end of the day when we ask you, "Where are you going to get your money?" you don't tell us.

I want to be able to say to you that New Democrats in the 1999 election said that we would roll back the tax cuts for those earning over 80,000 taxable dollars. Why? Because we think those people are doing OK and that the people who are not doing OK are the ones who earn \$30,000 or less, and that's 50% of the working population of Ontario. These people don't get a tax break. They don't get any money back. But those over \$80,000 earn a hefty amount of money that they don't really need. So we were hoping the Liberals, as they rail against the tax cuts—as we do, as New Democrats have done continually, consistently—would take the same position that we would, and that is to say we've got to get some of that money back. If you don't get any of that money in that way, I'm not sure where you're going to grow your money.

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** We're not going to come to you for advice on money.

**Mr Marchese:** I know you're not going to come to us for advice, Marie Bountrogianni from Hamilton. I know you're going to go to someone else for advice. I hope you don't go to the Tories for advice on this one, because I know some of you say, yes, tax cuts are good. I know you say that, and that's an idea the Tories like too. Chrétien likes it. I know you won't come to us for advice, but please be honest; tell us where you're going to get your money to fund the capping of these primary grades.

As New Democrats we speak about the need to fund early childhood education from age two, as they do in France, as a more critical idea to help, to do prevention in those early years, to give to children in a class-based society the opportunities they need in those very early years before they get to JK, if they have a full-time program, and before they get to SK, where much of that educational learning is pre-set. So you want to get children at an early age where you can actually help to reduce the inequality of class, because if you come from a professional background—and not just money; money doesn't give you the kind of education that some people think people with money have. No. Professional individuals who have gone through the educational system and throughout the elementary, secondary, and college and university system are more likely to pass on those literary and those literacy skills to their children in a way that they will perform better. Not everybody in society is so lucky. So we say, as New Democrats, if you want to reduce inequality of those social class differences, put the money and the investment in the early years.

New Democrats would find some of that money by rolling back some of that income tax from those individuals so very special to the Tories, so very close to the Tories. We would take some of that money back. We would find ways, new economic development ideas that would generate some amount, but in addition we've got to get some of that money back from the income tax cuts, because at the end of it, you fine Liberals, with the Tories, if you don't get any of that money back, which amounts to from \$10 billion to \$12 billion that this government has given away, we're in trouble, you see. Neither Liberals nor New Democrats could do anything unless we find ways of bringing some of that wealth back, taking it from those, yes, very rapacious individuals who can never get enough from the Tories. Rapacity is the name of the game for these wealthy individuals who can never get enough, and they continue to demand less tax burden on these people who don't really need it, don't need the money. They in fact need to pay us, society, so that we could keep our educational and health programs. You can't buy into this idea that you can't touch the tax cuts.

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** What do the auto workers say about that?

**Mr Marchese:** I don't know. I'm only speaking about the Liberals, member for Hamilton Mountain. I don't want to speak for the others, but I want you to speak for yourselves. What some labour people might say for me is neither here nor there. They have their opinion. I'm

interested in you, as a political party aspiring to lead this place as the government, about your position.

I'm equally worried about some of the positions your members have taken. Mr Kennedy was quoted again in Now magazine—

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** A very good source.

**Mr Marchese:** I take all sources, whether they come from the Sun, the Globe, the Star, Now magazine, member for Hamilton Mountain. I take all of these stories as fact until proven otherwise.

When I quoted Mr Kennedy the other day from an interview he did in High Park, we confirmed that he had said what he had said, and that is that he supports fairness and that, yes, they would presumably fund religious schools, not now, but sometime later.

So my question to the Liberals is, what do you mean, you are for fairness, and not now, but when? And what do you mean when you're against tax credits? Are you in fact saying fairness means full funding for religious schools? What are you saying? I, as a New Democrat, want you to be clear about what it is that you're saying.

In Now magazine, it is reported that Mr Kennedy contends that funding for religious schools doesn't necessarily mean less money for the public system. Both can be accommodated, he says. How? Mr Kennedy responds, "We don't have the answer to that at this time."

You can't confuse the public out there with your now presumably consistent message through Mr McGuinty that you are opposed to public dollars for private schools, but when asked, Mr Kennedy at least, on two occasions already, has said, with this one, "Full funding for religious schools doesn't necessarily mean less money for the public system. Both can be accommodated." Please, we need clarity.

Sorry. I know there are a few people, a few citizens out there, who want the Liberals and New Democrats to collaborate because the real enemy is over there, and I agree with them. Generally, the real enemy is there. I have no problem with that. I know where the reptiles are. Generally speaking, I know they're on the other side.

On the other hand, I believe we need sincerity, yes, clarity, yes. Consistency would be helpful. It would be helpful. We need from the Liberals a position that's clear. Are you against public dollars for religious schools, yes or no? Not yes today or no today and it might change tomorrow. Please. At least I need to know before I can say to the public, "I want to collaborate with the Liberals."

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** Oh, yes, that'll happen.

**Mr Marchese:** From time to time, I do collaborate with the Liberals. There are some fine people in the other party. There are some fine people in the Liberal Party, and I like to collaborate. From time to time I do that. I don't always attack Liberals. You know that. I think the public knows that and they watch the debates often enough to know that my attacks—at least I excoriate those people on a regular basis. You know that.

I'm asking for some clarity first on your position vis-à-vis funding for religious schools, and I know your

position that you do not support public dollars for private, non-denominational schools. I appreciate that. We're clear on that one. We are both clear on that one, I think, although I can't speak for you Liberals.

**Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings):** Thank you. We don't want you to speak for us.

**Mr Marchese:** And I don't want to speak for you. I'm asking you to speak for yourselves. I only quoted a paper because you can contradict it; you can say, "No, that wasn't true. I didn't say that. No, he said that"—you can say that.

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**Mr Parsons:** Give us your time.

**Mr Marchese:** I'm not going to give you my time. This is coming around. Don't worry.

Again, Liberals and New Democrats are clearly on the same side when it comes to the fact the Tories have taken away \$2 billion from the educational system. It is an unbelievable thing that you could hear both the Premier and the Minister of Education stand every day saying they had put money into the educational system, not taken out money. They say it without squirming. They say it with a straight face. It amazes me.

We have credible sources, and an economist, that have said they've taken \$2.3 billion out of the educational system, yet you have the Minister of Education continue to deny that. God bless them. Good citizens, God bless that they can say what they want to say. And they appear to be getting away with it, except where I have been, in London. In the hearings I held in London, the people were not fooled by this government. The various speakers who came in London and Guelph in fact spoke of the cuts that have been made to this educational system that have hurt our educational system in a serious way.

We have Sya Van Giest, who was a teacher-librarian, who spoke to the people in Guelph and commented about the loss of librarians in our educational system. This is new to us? But to hear this government, you would think that there is more money for everyone and everything in the educational system. We have fewer librarians now than ever before. They are key and central to the educational system, key to learning, a key aspect of the literacy of young people, both in the elementary and secondary panels. We're losing money for our libraries in the programs run by the city of Toronto and we're losing librarians in the public system.

We have fewer textbooks now than ever before.

It's not something that I'm saying; it's the people who came to our meetings: Don Kaufman from Guelph, Ian Hendry, Sya Van Giest, Bob McCracken and Josh Alcock from Guelph, the people who have spoken to me in terms of the deputations. I'm not talking about the others who had a lot more to say about the cuts to our educational system.

We're losing our specialty teachers. Remember, good citizens, librarians don't count as part of that formula. So if you get rid of them, it's too bad. Who needs them, presumably?

We have over 35,000 special education students, as has been mentioned before, on a waiting list. They require some special attention and we don't have the resources to be able to deal with that. How can this government get away with that?

I've got to tell you, they're not getting away with it, because the people who are actively involved in educational issues across the province are not buying the statement of the Minister of Education that says, "We have put \$2 billion into the educational system."

I hear it in Toronto and I hear it everywhere. I'll be in Timmins this week and I'm sure I'll be hearing the same things, that the funding formula, one that is funded on the basis of square footage rather than the needs of children and communities, is an inadequate way to fund for education. I know why this government did it. They centralized education financing and they created this formula as a way of squeezing money out of the educational system, which they've done effectively. As a consequence, however, they've destroyed our educational system. Liberals and New Democrats agree with that. No problemo on that one.

On this resolution, when they speak about capping primary grades, New Democrats have no disagreement. But when we decide on the priorities, we have to be able to say we're going to do all of these things: we're going to give tax cuts, we're going to cut the debt, we're going to increase services, we're going to put money back into the educational system, and here's how we're going to do it. I'm saying to you, Liberals, on your resolution today, that I don't know where you're going to come up with the money to do it, because this government will have taken \$12 billion by the end of their term for corporate tax cuts to that very special interest group they pertain and belong to and another \$7 billion to \$8 billion for income tax cuts that go to individuals in society, most of whom are well to do and don't need the tax breaks. That's \$12 billion gone. When the economy slips, as it inevitably does, there won't be money in the kitty to be able to draw from so that we can continue to provide an education system that is sound for people in communities, for students and parents. And we won't have the money to be able to provide a health care system that is sound and beneficial to all Ontarians.

So I say to you, where are you going to find your money? Be frank about that. Please, unequivocally, on this issue of public dollars for private schools, are you against funding for private religious schools? Yes or no? I know you are against tax credits, as this government has proposed, as we are—we're against them—but we are as against funding for religious private schools as we are against funding for non-denominational private schools, most of which don't want our money.

When it takes \$16,000 to \$20,000 to send your kid to Upper Canada College, the tax credit these people are giving to them is a pittance to people who can afford to spend anywhere from \$16,000 to \$28,000 to send their kid to Upper Canada College. Do you think those schools need the tax credit or any other kind of support? They don't want it and they don't need it. They don't want it

because they don't want to be held accountable. The money is for, yes, those privileged individuals; it's also for religious schools.

I'm sorry. I believe in a public system that is inclusive of our multicultural, multiracial community. I believe in it strongly, and I believe our public system can and must accommodate our differences, religious and cultural, in our system. That's the only place to accommodate our differences, not by fragmenting, segmenting and encouraging intolerance, which indeed happens in many of these schools, through the funding of public dollars for private schools.

In many of these private schools, you don't see too many children with disabilities. The public system has the majority of children with disabilities. The public system accommodates our differences. While we support this resolution by the Liberals, I've asked them to please, for my benefit if no one else's, but for the citizens, be clear.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. You were the only one standing. If you would like to go ahead, please do.

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** I would be very pleased to speak to the opposition day motion that has been presented to the Legislature by my leader—

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm surprised that the member opposite, seeing that one of our members stood in their place and obviously wasn't recognized, would not yield the floor at this point in time.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** I tried.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I seek unanimous consent—

**The Acting Speaker:** The minister has asked for unanimous consent that the speaker revert to the government side. Is it agreed? It is agreed. The Chair recognizes the member for Thornhill.

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** I want to thank all the members in the House for agreeing to the unanimous consent, and I thank the member from Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington for—

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** For being so gracious.

**Mrs Molinari:** Yes, for being so kind as to let us have our turn here.

**Mr Marchese:** Say what you feel. Speak from the heart.

**Mrs Molinari:** Yes, I am going to speak from the heart, because this is something that's very near and dear to me. I'm pleased to have the opportunity today to discuss the Ontario government's commitment to quality education in Ontario.

We are committed to providing students in Ontario with the very highest standards of publicly funded education. We want them to graduate high school with the knowledge and the skills they need to excel in post-secondary and in the workplace.

1620

Over the past six years our government has been putting in place numerous initiatives that have radically improved the education system. There are several key elements of our education plan. One is a fair funding focus on students. The member from Timmins-James Bay talked about the fact that we changed the way we are funding education and funding schools. He is correct: we are changing it in a way that is more fair to all of the students in the province of Ontario.

In the past the way education was funded was based on an assessment basis. So boards that were rich in assessment were able to access more dollars and more resources. Boards that were poor in assessment were able to access less. Traditionally they have been the Catholic schools. In York region we have the York Catholic board and the York public board. For many, many years the funding has been inequitable because of the assessment. With the present funding model, once it's fully phased in, all of the students in the province of Ontario will have equal dollars and equal access.

The other is more resources in the classroom. We have provided more textbooks. We've actually purchased textbooks and given the textbooks to the schools, and allowed for textbook funds in their budgets to be able to spend on more resources.

The new and more rigorous curriculum: parents demanded it, post-secondary institutions demanded a more rigorous curriculum and the employers demanded it. It was said, over and over again, that students coming out of secondary education were not prepared adequately for post-secondary studies.

Regular and standardized tests to show how our students are doing: this is accountability. We are measuring the accountability in the schools by testing students and ensuring that after certain grades they have achieved the requirement they need to be promoted to the next grade.

A stronger voice for parents in their children's education: we have mandated school councils in all schools. School councils have a very important function. They are to advise the principal on decisions that affect their individual schools.

All these initiatives are increasing the quality and the accountability of Ontario's publicly funded education system. We are strengthening education in Ontario, and building an education system that ensures our children's success means preparing them for a world that is being transformed by information and communications technology. That means that the skills they need in the workplace will continue to evolve. Many of the young people entering high school this fall are likely to have jobs that do not exist today. These rapid changes in career opportunities are realities in the province of Ontario and around the world. It is vital that our education system ensures that Ontario children are keeping up with their global peers. We must continue our strong focus on quality, student achievement and improvement.

To meet the challenges of technology and the knowledge economy the Ontario government is staying focused

on four important aspects of our evolving education system. We are increasing education standards and performance-based accountability for the system. We are providing students, parents and communities with greater flexibility and choice. We are making greater use of technologies. We recognize the importance of lifelong learning.

Allow me to give a few examples of how those trends are affecting our publicly funded education system. New, challenging kindergarten and elementary curricula are now in place. The new four-year high school program is being phased in. Our teacher testing program will ensure that all Ontario teachers have the up-to-date knowledge and skills they need to help students reach their full potential.

This fall we will phase in standards for mandatory professional development, with recertification every five years, performance appraisals, evaluation and decertification. This will ensure that teachers are evaluated consistently and regularly, with input from parents. Next spring we will begin a new qualifying test for all new teacher graduates as well as for all teachers trained outside Ontario.

School councils now have the right to make recommendations to their principal or school board on any matter. This reflects our commitment to provide parents with more avenues for active participation in the education system. This fall we will launch an annual survey to measure parent satisfaction with the education system. We are proposing to allow parents to enrol their children in any available school within the system. We are eliminating the institutional bias against home schooling by helping parents gain access to standard tests and other learning tools.

Earlier this month, in the provincial budget, we announced additional plans to increase choice in education by establishing the equity in education tax credit. It will give parents a tax credit of up to \$3,500 phased in over five years for fees they pay to send their children to independent schools in Ontario. This is 50% of the maximum \$7,000 tuition that one would pay. We are making fairness a priority so that parents who want their children educated in their culture and religion have the opportunity to do so if they wish. The equity in education tax credit is about choice, fairness and supporting cultural and religious diversity.

This government believes in listening to Ontarians. In my riding of Thornhill I have hosted several round table discussions asking the constituents of Thornhill what they would like to see the government do in a number of the issues that have come to my attention through my constituency office. Certainly providing some assistance to those who send their children to independent schools was one of the highest priorities.

In January I hosted a round table on education funding for independent schools. It was very well attended and there were many topics covered within that round table discussion. One of the areas that came up loud and clear during the end of that was that the one decision they

wanted this government to take and the one preferred choice would be to offer tax credits for parents choosing to send their children to independent schools.

I want to quote from a letter that was written in the Toronto Star from a Thornhill resident, Charles Wagner. He says in his letter:

"Many parents sending their children to private schools are not wealthy. They are hard-working people who turn to private schools because their needs are not served by the public school system."

"In many of these schools, parents sacrifice virtually every disposable dollar toward their children's education. They are hit twice because they pay their taxes to the public education system and sometimes pay more than \$10,000 in tuition per child."

"McGuinty's statement ignores the real hardship for poor and middle-class people who will be helped by this tax credit."

"He also fails to address the blatant unfairness of the present system. The tax credit is the first bona fide attempt to address that inequity."

He concludes by saying, "I suggest that the future of our children and our country's well-being hinges on educational policies. School choice will force all schools to improve their product. If your priority is our children, you will support this tax credit."

Another resident of Thornhill, who actually was in attendance at my round table and contributed to the discussion—I want to quote from a Toronto Star article in which he was interviewed. I want to say I respect that the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan has different views on this, but when she says that this will be destroying the public education system, that is absolutely false.

Bernie Farber, who is the executive director of the Canadian Jewish Congress for the Ontario region, when he was interviewed on that topic, "rejected the argument that aiding private schools will weaken the public education system."

"That's just not based on fact," he said. "We will point to Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Quebec. All these provinces give funding to their independent schools and their public systems have not fallen apart."

"We believe, in this particular instance, Mr Harris did a courageous thing," Mr Farber said."

**1630**

Mike Harris is courageous, because we are in a position of making decisions that affect all of Ontarians. We listen to what Ontarians are saying and we respond to what their requests are. Our government is making it possible for parents who have been denied the choice of sending their children to independent schools in the past to now have that opportunity.

Many people are concerned that our government's tax credit will come at the expense of the public education system. By no means is the equity-in-education tax credit meant to undermine the public education system. In provinces where this has been in place already, they

confirm that this is not the case. I'd like to quote from Lee Hollaar, who is the director of the Society of Christian Schools in British Columbia, an organization representing 43 schools and about 9,000 students.

"Society is best served by having a rich array of alternatives in education..."

"It's not about elitism," he says. "It's about communities of shared values that celebrate diversity and are looking for secure alternatives."

We are committed to a strong and effective public education system. We are increasing funding to public education by \$360 million in 2001-02. This is on top of approximately \$390 million that was added in 2000-01. Since 1995, we have increased education spending from \$12.9 billion to \$13.8 billion, which is more than that required to meet enrolment growth. Moreover, the equity-in-education tax credit displays our commitment to the betterment of education in the province of Ontario as a whole. We are providing the people of Ontario with the choice of a high-quality, well-funded public system or independent schools that offer religious, cultural or pedagogical differences.

We will continue to make new investments in the publicly funded education system to improve the quality of education in Ontario, something this government has been committed to since 1995. We have never shied away from putting parents and students first. We have made more quality reform in the education system.

I want to clarify some of the dispute between vouchers and tax credits because, through debates today and in recent weeks, the opposition keeps referring to the equity-in-education tax credit as a voucher. Once again, this tax credit is not a voucher. They obviously do not understand the difference between a tax credit and a voucher. A voucher would remove money from the public system. We have increased money in the public system. This tax credit does not take money away from the public system. The tax credit promotes parental choice in their children's education. When a parent takes a voucher to an independent school instead of to a public school, the value of the grant is effectively taken out of the public system. This equity-in-education tax credit does not remove funding from public education. What it does is increase the number of educational opportunities available to children.

Parents in Ontario demand fairness, they want flexibility, and they want the choice to do what's in the best interest of their children's education. Why should we deny them that right? We are respecting cultural and religious diversity and we are making parents' concerns a priority and putting students first. The equity-in-education tax credit responds to this concern. It supports educational choice and respects cultural diversity. There are approximately 700 independent schools in Ontario, including Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Hindu schools. In Thornhill, there are several religious and independent schools, and all these parents stand to benefit because of the equity-in-education tax credit.

We have chosen to provide the tax credit directly to parents so that they can decide where they want to send

their children to school and so the independent schools can continue to strive for excellence. Absolutely no money is going to any private school. The tax credit is going to parents who choose to send their children to religious or independent schools.

Finally, the Ontario government has increased its investment in the public education system. It is clear we are committed to the betterment of education in Ontario as a whole. For the 2001-02 school year, we have increased funding by more than \$360 million. Overall education funding has increased from \$12.9 billion to \$13.8 billion since this government took office in 1995, an increase of almost \$1 billion.

The many steps I have outlined confirm this government's commitment to strengthening public education in Ontario. The very best education of our children and grandchildren is in the best interests of all of us. By working together, we can ensure that Ontario students, today and tomorrow, make remarkable achievements in school, in post-secondary institutions, in the workplace and as caring, productive and active citizens of this great province.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** I am very pleased today to have the opportunity to speak to the motion that has been presented by my leader, Dalton McGuinty, which I believe will definitely improve the quality of education in the province when it is supported by the members of this House.

The resolution presented by Mr McGuinty speaks to a meaningful reduction in class size. It speaks to the fact that this is an initiative we believe should be funded with those dollars that the government in its budget plan would suggest should be directed toward tax credits to individuals who would choose to enrol their children in a private system. I believe Mr McGuinty's resolution supports public education.

We have a public education system in crisis, and it is in crisis because it has been chronically underfunded since the election of Mike Harris. I've had the privilege, since 1985, of being very directly involved with the publicly funded education system in Ontario. Very sadly, in the latter part of my tenure as a school board trustee I was witnessing the systematic dismantling of the public education system. I witnessed a Minister of Education describe the plan of the government to create a crisis in education and, sadly, we see now in the province of Ontario that has in fact occurred.

I want to talk a little bit about some of the statements we hear from the government and from the Minister of Education with respect to the resources that Mike Harris has directed toward education. The minister would say they are putting more dollars toward education than any other government. The minister doesn't complete that thought with the statement about the realignment of services and the fact that local boards are no longer able to levy a portion of education expenses. Of course the Ministry of Education is directing more money, because it's picking up that local share.

What the government does not talk about is that in fact today less money is being spent per pupil in Ontario than

ever before—fewer dollars per pupil. In some jurisdictions in the province, those numbers can be upwards of \$2,000 less per pupil, and that has an impact within the school community, within the classroom and upon the students. My leader is presenting a resolution here today that will address some of the negative impacts that are being felt because of that chronic underfunding.

1640

I would like to speak to the issue of the notion of vouchers that has been presented in the budget. Sometimes members of the government rail about that terminology; it's not one they're especially comfortable with.

We have made some inquiries about the voucher system. If an individual chose to send his or her child to a private school and was in a position of not paying provincial tax, how might they benefit from the \$3,500 tax credit? The reality is, they would get a cheque from the provincial government for \$3,500. That's a voucher. That's a ticket saying, "Here, you choose not to support the publicly funded system. We will pay you for the private school choice that you make." So while you may not like that term, I believe it is very appropriate.

There were some comments made by the member for Thornhill, who would suggest to the people assembled here, and in the debate on the resolution, that the tax credit system will not in any way impact the publicly funded system. I would like to draw her attention specifically, but also the members of the House and those people who are listening, to a letter from the Minister of Education that is dated January 13, 2000. This letter was written to the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy by the Honourable Janet Ecker, who continues to be the Minister of Education.

In the body of the letter, the minister explains that, "While the government of Ontario recognizes the right of parents to choose alternative forms of education for their children, it continues to have no plans to provide funding to private religious schools or to parents of children that attend such schools. Extending funding to religious private schools would result in fragmentation of the education system in Ontario and undermine the goal of universal access to education." That was from the Minister of Education, and I have to say that it in no way is coherent or complies with the presentations that have been made by government members today. In fact, I think it demonstrates a great inconsistency.

We also have a letter from the Premier of Ontario, Mike Harris himself, written on January 18, 2000, to my leader, Dalton McGuinty, where he very clearly states that by implementing a system of support for private schools, it "would remove from our existing public education system at least \$300 million per year, with some estimates as high as \$700 million. Obviously, such an action would run directly counter to Ontario's long-standing commitment to public education." That statement was made by Mike Harris, Premier of Ontario. How inconsistent can one be?

I want to talk about the crisis in education in my riding. Here, the Premier has very clearly indicated that

supporting the private system in the province could cost anywhere from \$300 million to \$700 million. I want to talk about some of the issues I hear about in my riding. Like the member from Thornhill, I am in touch with people in my riding. I hear from them on a very regular basis about the issues they have with the publicly funded system, which they support, but they are so very distraught at its serious underfunding.

They talk to me about the fact that their students don't have textbooks. The Minister of Education, when pressed on this, will say, "We're spending more money on textbooks than we ever have before." And so you should, because this government has introduced new curricula in every grade, and that has an impact. You have not sufficiently addressed the impact that has had within our local school communities, as they do not have sufficient resources to acquire sufficient numbers of textbooks. Consequently, school councils and parent groups are out raising money for something as basic as textbooks in our schools.

Parents talk to me about the lack of resources in classrooms. Parents feel so badly that the students in the classes of their children don't have the human resources they need. They believe that in some cases there are needs for some teacher assistants and they're not there because the board does not have the resources available.

On the weekend I received calls from parents in a community that will be expected to share its administrator, its principal, because this government has changed the way that boards can now look to provide administrators within school communities. We hear from schools in rural Ontario that have part-time secretaries and part-time principals, and they deserve much more than that. Because of the underfunding of the Mike Harris government, in small rural communities the student body numbers do not enable boards to provide those full-time services that are very much required.

I hear from parents about transportation issues and how services have had to be modified because boards don't have the resources they once had in order to provide that important service, particularly in rural Ontario. I find it very interesting when we hear the Minister of Education speak about the importance of extracurricular activities. While I certainly support and believe very firmly that they are integral to the well-rounded education of our students, in rural Ontario, in some school communities where upwards of 80% and 90% of the student body is bused, there are no resources provided by this government so that those rural kids can stay after school and participate in the yearbook club or on the basketball team or in any of the other school groups such as the music club or the band. Those resources just aren't there. The option for extracurricular activities is not there. And it's not because the teachers are not there to provide that for the students; they are not there because this government will not provide the resources for the board to provide transportation for those students.

The resolution we have today from my leader is, in my opinion, one of the most positive initiatives we've heard

that will improve the quality of education for our children in Ontario. He talks about the cap of 20 students per class in junior kindergarten through to grade 3. I think now more than ever, we, as a society, are aware of the importance of investing in our youngest citizens. Surely the government must agree that this is a most worthwhile investment. We know that reducing the number of pupils a teacher has in the classroom has direct benefits for the pupils. They achieve at a higher level, and if there are challenges for the students, they are more easily accommodated and addressed in a setting with fewer students.

I very proudly speak in support of the resolution. I believe my leader has offered a very reasonable solution in terms of how to improve public education. This is a way we can support that change, by revoking the notion of supporting privately funded schools and investing in our public education system. Our children deserve that. The children of Ontario deserve the opportunity to have a well-funded, well-resourced public school system. I certainly hope that all members of the Legislature will be able to support this resolution in favour of children in Ontario.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I appreciate the opportunity to join in the debate. Part of the resolution before us today speaks to classroom size, so the first thing I'd like to do is to put on the record a report that was done not that long ago in which Suzanne Zeigler—who is or was a researcher for the former Toronto Board of Education and who was a researcher with the Royal Commission on Learning—gathered information based on international experience. What she found—and this is not unlike other reports—was that in order to have a significant and meaningful impact on the quality of learning in the classroom, you had to actually lower the number of students to 17, at a minimum.

1650

I realize that doing that in one fell swoop would cost an incredible amount of money, and I'm not suggesting for a second that's a platform we would even run on, saying, "We'll do that overnight," but I do think that if the government's going to brag about the importance of capping the number of students in the classroom, the first thing we ought to do is understand that this, in and of itself, is not going to make a significant difference. It does if you're starting at 35, obviously, just from a common sense point of view, but in terms of actually affecting the quality of learning, you've got to be at 17 students, and that is a bare minimum. They did a study in Tennessee, where they moved to 17, and they saw improvement, but marginal.

So let's understand that when you're bragging about this, you're really not at the point where it's making the kind of difference your words would suggest. What we maybe need to do is look at least at targeting that we're going to get to that figure down the road and show the public a plan. If the cost is too much to do, as I say, in one fell swoop, then let's build it in phases. But please, let's stop pretending. I ask the government member to stop pretending that reiterating your legislated cap on the

number of students in the classroom is going to make a tremendous amount of difference, because it's not.

We on this side of the House have said to the government that almost all—not all, but almost all—of the problems we're having in the public schools at one point or another go back to funding. All roads lead to Rome; all the roads lead back to funding. Whether we're talking about supplies in the classroom, the number of students, the number of teachers, the kinds of programs, transportation, cleaning the classrooms, no matter what we're talking about in terms of the education system, at the end of the day the problems are financial.

One has to make the argument that the reason you did this—because a reasonable person would say, "Why would the government do that, especially when revenues were up and they've been in an economic boom?" The reality is that this government has taken between \$7 billion and \$8 billion a year and given that back in tax cuts that benefited mostly the very wealthy. For those ordinary, working families who may have received \$20 or \$30 a month or \$5 or \$10 a week, ask yourself, does that replace the quality of education we've lost in terms of what our children are experiencing when they go into the public education system?

The government brags a lot; they love to brag. They talk a lot about the fact that they now have a set funding per pupil. Let me read you something regarding that, and this supports an argument we've made all along. BDO Dunwoody, a chartered accountants firm, wrote to the Ontario Public School Boards' Association in January 1999 and said this: "The use of averages or per pupil grants, while simple in concept, has resulted in considerable gains or losses in many of the operating budgets of the province's school boards."

We said that all along. I want to give credit to Judith Bishop, who's the trustee for two of the wards in my riding, wards 1 and 2, because she publishes this information and gets it out to the parents, and that's why people in Hamilton have a good understanding of what's happening and why: why we have so many problems in our public education system.

I want to mention parenthetically that this is one of the finest trustees I've ever known. I'm a big fan of Judith Bishop. She's a non-partisan individual. I want to say to the government that she's one of the few trustees I know of in all of Ontario who represents two wards, a couple of the toughest wards facing the greatest challenges in terms of income and other socio-economic challenges, especially ward 2, incredible challenges in terms of what people and families and children are facing.

She has to represent two wards. Ray Mulholland, the chair of the board, made a request at the time that you allow the board to have one other trustee, and you wouldn't do it.

I want to just underscore the fact that the only thing that makes this work at all is that we have such an outstanding trustee in Judith Bishop. Were it not for that, if we had a mere human or just someone who wasn't of that calibre, we would be losing big time. Where is this

showing itself? Meet with Judith Bishop some time and see how tired she is covering all of this territory.

I read you the quote that talked about the funding and the fact that, first of all, you're basing it on averages and, secondly, when you do it on a per pupil basis you like to say, "Oh, that makes everybody equal." Well, it doesn't, because not all children, not all families and not all communities start from the same point.

Sometimes it's hard to get the concept about equality and fairness. When you watch the Olympic races, one could argue that if everybody started at exactly the same point, that's equal, right? I'm in the same position as the person next to me and they're in the same position and right across we're equal. If you end the debate there, it sounds like you're being fair, but you aren't, because if you take a look at the course those on the outer part of the course run a longer distance. Therefore, pure equality in its simplest form doesn't meet the test of fairness. Fairness requires that they stagger those runners so that the people on the inner track don't have an advantage and that those on the outer track aren't at a disadvantage.

When you use the funding formula you use now, you make it sound like everything is equal, but it's not fair. It doesn't take into account that there are challenges in my riding of Hamilton West, in downtown Hamilton, that do not exist to the same degree at all in Markham. Why on earth should anyone believe that giving both school boards the same amount of money is going to result in fairness for all the kids involved? But you ignore that because we've got to pay for the tax cut. That's the priority. Let's never lose sight of the fact that no matter how much we point out here on the floor, the only thing that really matters to this government is the tax cut. That's it. Everything else, everything, including our children's future, is secondary to your tax cuts, your gifts to the wealthy.

You talk a lot about spending in the classroom. Of course we know that you pulled a cute little shell game there where you said, "We're going to increase the amount of money that we spend on the classroom teaching, classroom spending," and then all you did was redefine what is classroom spending and you took out valuable obvious things like hydro. Hydro is not included as part of classroom spending—go figure—and you can have the computers in the classroom but maintaining the computers isn't part of classroom spending. Getting the children from home to the school, transportation, a huge issue for parents, is not included. You don't even include cleaning the classroom. That's not classroom spending in Tory world. In Tory world somehow all those things aren't necessary in a classroom; therefore, you didn't include them in your formula. Where does that get us? You're able, accurately, to say, "We increased money that's being spent in the classroom where it matters," and then, using your new formula, you show that you've increased some, very marginally, of those items that are left in the definition at the expense of everything else.

We've got a transportation crisis in Hamilton. You've been promising a formula since 1998, and we're still

waiting. We're in crisis in Hamilton, but it's not part of your classroom spending, so you can slash away at that. We've lost more support staff, caretakers and others. That doesn't count.

1700

Then you box in the school boards, the trustees, so that they have to follow your mantra. That explains, quite frankly, why you can stand up and say, "We've increased spending in the classroom. We've made things better. Aren't we wonderful?" Yet simultaneously, you've got every trustee, certainly in Hamilton and I suspect in a lot of other communities, including Ray Mulholland, the chair of the board, saying—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** I'm going to come to that, my friend, so you just hang on to that notion. We're going to come to that. You hang on.

What happens is, simultaneously those trustees are saying, "We're in crisis. We don't have enough textbooks, we don't have enough teachers, we don't have adequate transportation. The classrooms aren't as clean as they ought to be. We're having to cut English as a second language. We're having to cut all our special education programs and lay off those teachers." That's how both those things can happen simultaneously, because you changed the definition of what is classroom spending so that you can make that accurate statement, but back in Hamilton, in the real world, back on earth, our boards and our children are suffering.

In 1996, the Ontario School Board Reduction Task Force, the Sweeney report, showed that there were eight boards spending less than 40% of their expenditures on direct classroom spending, even by your new definitions. There were only 11 boards that were spending 60% or more in the classroom. Hamilton was one of the top boards. They were spending 61.5%, and the provincial average was only 53%. That's what our trustees have been able to do. But what does that mean and what is that reality? I want to compare that to what other boards are getting. Bear in mind, we are one of the most efficient boards and one of the most successful at ensuring a lowering of administrative costs and an increase in classroom spending, regardless of how you define it.

What do you do to a board like ours? What's the result? Out of 72 boards in the province, we're 69th in terms of revenue per pupil. We're one of the most efficient, we have greater challenges than most other communities, or at least many other communities, and we're one of the lowest in terms of per pupil dollars received from you. What gives?

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** It's taxes.

**Mr Christopherson:** My friend across the way from, I believe, Niagara Centre says, "It's taxes." I just want to bring to his attention and remind the member that in Hamilton, prior to you changing the law, when you no longer mandated and funded junior kindergarten, our school board trustees said, "We're not taking JK out of the system because it's just too damaging to our children." In order to pay for it, back when they still had

the power to do that—and you know, it's funny. For a government that purports to care that the government closest to the people should make the decisions that affect them the most, you took away their right to generate any revenue. In Hamilton—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** Hang on to your heckle for a second. No, not you, your buddy there beside you.

In Hamilton, in order to keep JK, they had to have a modest tax increase, back when they could do that. I stood in my place here and applauded the trustees for doing that because I thought it was in the best interests of the children of Hamilton. And you know what? Every trustee who stood for re-election who voted for the increase was re-elected. That sounds pretty democratic to me. We no longer have that ability because you, in the greatest centralizing of government powers in education—yes, I'll say it too—since Stalin, because that's what you'd accuse us of if we did it, you now do not give local governments any opportunity to reflect local challenges. It's all decided by the education czar. You make all the decisions and you took away all the decisions that were in the hands of the local government, and the democratic process was there to either support those trustees and return them to office or turf them out. If your thinking is right that tax cuts matter more than kids, every one of those trustees in Hamilton should have been booted out. Not one was. Why? Because at the end of the day Hamiltonians, like most other citizens in Ontario, are prepared to pay a fair price to get a quality education. That's what we had in Ontario under all three parties. We don't have that any more. You took that away from us.

Now you want to bleed away further from the public system by promoting, through tax cuts, people moving into the private education system, which just works fine for you because quite frankly I don't think you care an awful lot about the children and the families that are left behind. If they're not smart enough to make \$1 million, let them eat cake. You'll just make sure that those who have the money are able to get what they need from you. In return, you want the vote.

I want to re-emphasize in the last minute I have that in order to meet the 63.5% of education dollars being spent in the classroom, the only way the board could do it because of the rules that you put in place, because they're boxed in, was to lay off teachers who teach English as a second language.

I just did earlier today a member's statement—and you applauded—on SISO, the settlement agency in Hamilton that helps new Canadians get into the system. You all applauded and thought that was wonderful. I said to you that Hamilton is the third-largest recipient of new Canadians, whether they're immigrants or refugees, in Canada, the second-highest in Ontario, and we had to lay off teachers who teach English as a second language. How does that help our kids? Music teachers gone. The extra teachers and support that we needed for other challenges facing a lot of schools in Hamilton West, in downtown Hamilton, gone. So yes, we're proud of the

figure here, but what a price we're paying. What a price we are paying in Hamilton for your policies.

I'm just about out of time. I will, I hope, have an opportunity tonight some time after 9 o'clock to speak more directly to your privatization of the public education system. But let's be clear: there is a crisis in the public education system in Hamilton and nothing I've heard today tells me that you're hearing that message, or more importantly that you even care.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** I'm pleased to join the debate on the Liberal opposition day motion. I guess what bothers me is that this would have been the perfect opportunity for Mr McGuinty, when he made this motion, to actually put on the record where he stands on a variety of education issues. We certainly hear every day in question period a very one-sided rant. It's certainly not a debate in that hour, more like an inquisition where Mr McGuinty gets to make all sorts of inflammatory comments but no one ever holds him to account. I guess I thought that in the one hour the Liberal Party would have today Mr McGuinty would lead off by putting it clearly on the record in this chamber for everyone in the province to hear where he stands on the issue of the education tax credit as well as a wide range of the other education initiatives that our government has brought forward.

The fact that he very selectively reads the budget and chooses to ignore the paragraph before the education tax credit that committed to another \$360 million in funding for the public board I think is nothing short of shameful. The gross misconstruing of the budget and the support we've given public education is really quite unacceptable coming from the leader of the official opposition. Instead, we've had to rely on what we get second hand.

1710

I was intrigued to read in the Toronto Star just today that the Liberal Party went out in an attempt to beat the bushes. They chose as the venue for their first public meeting the little town of Toronto. Toronto has only 2.4 million people in it and there are another 2.4 million people within 30 minutes' drive around it, but despite the best efforts of the Liberal Party to beat the bushes, get their own supporters, their own team players, in fact their own staff members, to show up at these public events, a grand total of 75 people showed up yesterday at the Keele Street Community Centre.

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** They've got more than that on their payroll.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Dominic Agostino has a 10th of that on his staff, I see in Saturday's apology in the Hamilton Spectator.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** You're a slime bucket, an absolute slime.

**Mr Gilchrist:** The very first speaker—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** You'll need to withdraw that, the member from Hamilton East.

**Mr Agostino:** I withdraw it.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The bottom line is that the very first speaker to come forward, Diana Stapleton, a mother of two children, was just the first of many people out of that large group of 75 who showed up and who asked Mr McGuinty what he would do to the tax credit if he became Premier. Mr McGuinty was clear: he said he would scrap it.

We're not hearing those policy and public statements in this chamber where I believe it is the right of all members, if we're going to have a true debate, to hear both sides of the issue. Instead, he's hiding behind an extremely expensive initiative that, quite frankly, goes a long way to insulting students and teachers all across Ontario, because to all of us who went through an education system—not that long ago; some of my younger colleagues here quite recently—where we had class sizes of 30 or more, and I never had a class smaller than 30, I guess the submission we're getting from Mr McGuinty in his resolution today is that those teachers were incapable. We heard from Mr Christopherson that unless you're down to 17, you can't have a quality education here or anywhere else in North America. What an insult to all of my teachers and the tens of thousands of teachers who have practised so ably in this province for many decades.

As well, you pull out the old chestnut about demographic change. There's no doubt that places like Toronto have seen a significant shift in the makeup of the student population. That's not altogether true in other parts of the province. Certainly rural Ontario has seen far fewer changes, but you'd like to tar everyone with the same brush. At the same time, you'd like to create the inference that just because you come from a recent immigrant family, you're not capable of achieving anything in our school system without extraordinary supports. At the same time, in this resolution you're insulting every teacher and saying, "You're not capable of taking care of the same number of kids your parents, and not only your parents but your older brothers and sisters, took care of as teachers 10, 15 or 20 years ago." You're saying our students today aren't capable of doing without an extraordinary degree of hand-holding. What an absolutely pretentious, offensive insult to the teachers and the students of Ontario. But it is so typical of what we get from the Liberal Party.

We have seen in this budget once again an increase in the spending on public education. That is absolute increase. Those are hard dollars: \$360 million is an over 2.5% increase in funding in public education this year, at the same time that enrolment is expected to increase by only 1.5%. Math class wasn't that long ago that you can't conclude that that means per pupil, every student in Ontario is getting more money per capita than they got last year. By the way, last year they got more money than the year before etc.

The other side would suggest there's no responsibility on the part of the school boards to find other ways to control the extraordinary escalation in costs that vexed property taxpayers in the lost decade from 1985 to 1995.

We've heard time and again that in that decade enrolment increased 16%. To be fair, inflation went up 40%, and on the assumption that you couldn't do anything better in terms of finding new efficiencies than matching the cost-of-living increase, the school boards presumably would have needed 40% more money. What did they actually increase their budgets and their property tax by? Under the Liberal and the NDP governments, property taxes for education purposes went up 120% for 16% more students.

Did the quality of education go up 120%? As an employer who saw the average literacy and numeracy skills of the graduates coming and applying for jobs at my modest retail store decline year after year after year, I submit to you the answer is no.

The curriculum didn't challenge them and the teachers weren't asked to find new and innovative ways of bringing in technology, of finding ways to inspire students to meet the challenges of a changing time. Instead, we had first the Liberals and the NDP, defenders of the status quo. To this day, they continue their flawless record in that position, because everything we have suggested, every initiative we've brought forward—teacher testing, student testing, a tougher curriculum, more money spent in our schools—has been opposed by the Liberals and the NDP.

Perhaps what is most offensive, what is most galling and—you're not allowed to use the word "hypocritical" and I won't—contradictory in the position being taken by Mr McGuinty today is that he is calling for—and let me again cite the resolution today: "That ... the government should make reducing class sizes ... to a real cap of 20 students ..." a priority.

When we reduced the average class sizes, not once but twice throughout the last six years, every single member of the Liberal Party voted against that. Every single member of the Liberal Party and the NDP have voted against every one of our initiatives, including class size.

The bottom line in all of this is, they have no leg to stand on when it comes to calling for new and innovative ways of dealing with the educational challenges in the province of Ontario because they have advanced no suggestions, they have fought every initiative we've brought forward and they have ignored the parents who spoke loud and clear through their votes in 1995 and 1999. They would suggest that somehow all of the initiatives that we talked about and brought forward were somehow mysteriously derived once we had gotten to this building.

The fact of the matter is, more than any other government in the history of the province of Ontario, we challenged the voters longer and in more detail before both the 1995 and 1999 elections to seriously consider the positions we were articulating. On the basis of what they knew to be our position, they cast informed votes in 1995 and 1999. While their votes and the decision embodied in those votes may vex the opposition members every day they serve in here, if you believe in a democracy you've got to give faith to those parents who read

very clearly in the Common Sense Revolution in 1995 and the Blueprint in 1999 what we were proposing to do in the education system.

We've done all those things. The opposition has voted against it consistently. They are now trying to get onside with an initiative that would cost billions of dollars if it were followed through, and would be totally impractical. For example, in a situation where in a rural school there is a grand total of 21 students taking a particular course, they would propose that you hire a new teacher for the 21st student.

There's cost-effectiveness, there's looking for new and innovative ways of dealing with the challenge in our education system. It's a great way to pander to Earl Manners, one of your few union leader supporters, and quite frankly, it probably explains the flip-flopping on the education tax credit.

It's going to be very interesting to see the turnout on the day of the vote and whether members like Mr Colle, Mr Bryant, Mr Kwinter and Mr Kennedy are prepared to come in and say with their vote here what they said on the hustings in 1999 and before that, when they said yes to giving support to the parents who made the decision to send their kids to independent schools.

I'd like to see what their position is going to be to those same parents the day after they either avoid their responsibility and don't show up for the vote, or flip-flop on this important initiative.

But I want to remind everyone watching that at the same time they'll be voting against a budget that puts 360 million new dollars into the public system they claim to be so supportive of. The fact of the matter is, the same budget that introduced the education tax credit committed a record spending in the public system. That's been the hallmark of our government. It will continue to be the hallmark of our government. I am proud to support our budget and I will be equally proud to vote to defeat this resolution.

1720

**Mr Parsons:** Since 1982, I have been a supporter of public education as a parent, as a volunteer, as a trustee and as a board chair. I am proud to be part of a party where the leader, Dalton McGuinty, is a strong advocate and is the public voice for public education. However, since 1995 public education in Ontario has been under attack.

Ontario is different from the other provinces and is unique in that this government has attempted to drive students out of the public system since it took office. We have seen cuts to the music programs. We have seen extracurricular activities go away. We see libraries in schools now closed, open a couple of hours a day or a couple of days a week because of volunteers. We see late busing gone. The program that provided equity for rural students has been disappearing from this province because of this government.

We see new curriculum, but no funding for textbooks to support the curriculum. So this government has aggressively attacked public education and made it more

attractive to leave, because parents have to do what's right for their children. If the public system appears to not be delivering the service, then a private school becomes an attractive alternative. The reality is that this public system in Ontario serves our students and serves them well.

The main weapon of attack that's taken place against our schools has been the magic funding formula that was supposed to solve everything. Well, the first thing it did was it took away local control. It devalued the trustees elected by that community so that the parents didn't have meaningful access to elected people who could make a difference in their community. It took and funded everything based on the student—so many dollars per student. Now, that sounds fair, but in reality it isn't. If we have three or four or five fewer students riding a bus or in a classroom, it generates significantly fewer dollars for that board. But if you have five fewer pupils on a bus, you still have to run that bus. If you have five fewer pupils in that classroom, you still need to staff the classroom. So we've gone to a funding formula that severely penalizes the publicly funded school boards when there is a change in enrolment or a shift of patterns within the province.

We are seeing in much of rural Ontario a decline in student enrolment. We're seeing a lower birth rate in Ontario, and in fact the major growth that's taking place is because of immigration in Toronto. Toronto requires the additional resources, but the small rural boards are being penalized because, as one or two students leave, they're still paying the same heating bill, they're still paying the same electricity bill. So we have had an attack that attempts to drive the students out of the public system.

The public has very clearly said they don't support the voucher system, but the polls done by this government were very cleverly phrased to say that, rather than vouchers, we will have a tax credit system, because the public first reacts to it as, well, it doesn't cost anything to give a tax receipt. We know now that it will take about \$500 million out of this province.

There is only one taxpayer and there is only one pie to be sliced up. Now, \$500 million is difficult to visualize, and it is hard to imagine what effect it would have on the schools. If we put it another way, \$500 million is greater than the total budget of the Ministry of the Environment. We are in fact giving away the Ministry of the Environment or the Ministry of Natural Resources.

I also struggle with the ethics of introducing this program. The public becomes cynical of politicians who don't keep their promise. We have seen letters from the Premier, letters from the education minister within the last year. During the 1999 election, the Premier was extremely clear that he did not support funding of private schools, and now we're seeing it delivered by being slipped into a budget. This is an issue that certainly deserves public consultation. This in fact is an issue that deserves the public knowing ahead of time and being able to vote accordingly.

I believe one of the strengths of the province of Ontario has been the diversity of people who come

together. I'm not interested in just diversity in a shopping centre; I'm interested in diversity starting with the grassroots, which is within our schools. Our publicly funded schools serve every student, whether they be blind or whether they be deaf or whether they be gifted or anything in between, and the strength of our province has come from that mix working together.

I would suggest it is a very slippery slope we are starting on. We must not look at the issue of the funding of private schools in isolation. It is part of a total picture that involves the privatization of water systems, the privatization of the electricity systems in our province and the privatization of our jails and corrections. Will there be private police forces? Will there be private hospitals? If the public understands the concept of privatization, they need to realize that this is but one small building block in the large mosaic that's being created.

This province's number one obligation is not to students but to corporations. Things are being done that will make corporations happy to be in Ontario. We are in a race to the bottom to attract corporations and to have no taxes for them.

I am thrilled with our party's stance on this. I am thrilled with our leader's resolution today. If we believe in the province of Ontario as we have built it, then we believe in publicly funded, publicly accountable school systems.

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** I am pleased to take part in this debate this afternoon and to share some thoughts about the public schools, religious schools, private schools and the whole debate that's been going on for the last few days. I hope I can offer a little different perspective on education funding as it relates to both public and independent schools.

We are discussing today the Liberal resolution. Twenty-five students per class, 22, 20, one on one ratio: what is best? The Liberal Party never costs it out. They think they're just going to increase taxes, keep increasing the deficit because perhaps one-on-one is the best education. Perhaps it is.

Mr Speaker, I am, let me assure you and the people listening, very supportive of the Ontario school system. I'm a product of that system as well as the product of another system, a school in India, where I studied in my original education, so I have some comparisons I'll be touching on as I go along.

There's much to criticize in today's education system. Certainly the Minister of Education, the Honourable Janet Ecker, has poured her heart and soul into her portfolio for the last two years. I'm very happy to have such a competent, steady hand at the wheel. However, some problems still exist in education, and they're structural. They may be difficult, but not impossible, to tackle, for our Minister of Education.

Our 21-step plan for the 21st century, as laid out in the throne speech, includes this essential principle: in Ontario, "4,746 schools and 74,895 classrooms cannot be run"—I emphasize cannot be run—"from the Ministry of Education" in Toronto. Especially, one centralized

education system would mean one centralized collective agreement. We can only imagine how impractical that will be. Parents want the government to do more. Even more importantly, they want more input and influence in deciding how their children will be educated. Parents don't want to be ordered around at the say-so of teachers' unions or school board bureaucrats.

I have constituents of many backgrounds. Members of the House will be surprised to hear that in Peel region a language known as Punjabi, which is my mother tongue, is the second most spoken language. I'm sure the census everybody took on May 15 would highlight that as well.

The government recognizes that not every student is a round peg and not every school is a round hole. But we all have this in common: the most important thing parents want in their lives is to secure a bright future for their children, and that is known all over the world.

1730

Ontario's citizens come from across the globe. Many are willing to make the sacrifices, if necessary, to send their kids to a school which reflects their faith, their culture and their values. As many of you do, I also listen to my constituents. I listen every day and I understand their concerns. It shouldn't be necessary to take food off the table or to make those great sacrifices to give kids the education that is best for them. We must remember that parents in independent schools have already paid education taxes. Ontario's diverse families never accepted that Catholic Christian education deserves government support but that Sikh, Jewish or even Protestant Christian education did not. Past governments of every party have lagged behind parents in realizing the need for choices in education.

The equity in education tax credit is an important step in supporting parental choice. This government has committed to reducing the penalty that parents pay when they choose an independent school for their children. It is proposed to begin in the 2000 taxation year. It proposes to give parents a tax credit of up to \$3,500, starting with 10% and then going to 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%. That's a maximum of \$3,500. We will work to identify the appropriate framework for establishing eligibility for the tax credit.

As an MPP and as a parent—especially as a parent—I hear an earful about education every day. Just as we are supporting those parents who choose to educate their children in an independent school, we also encourage parental involvement and choice within the public school system. First, we made sure that the resources are in place for quality education. I'm glad to be able to report to parents that we have continued to increase our investment in public education overall. In fact, we are going to be spending \$360 million, over and above, next year. Education funding for the coming school year is projected to increase by 2.8%, higher than funding for this year. This means that education funding will have increased almost \$1 billion since this government took office in 1995, an increase from \$12.9 billion to \$13.8 billion.

I'm very surprised that all the members are coming back. There was hardly anybody here before.

I'm a member of the government that understands that parents want more influence as well. The Ministry of Education recently released new regulations that increase the accountability of the education system to parents and strengthen the voice of parents in the public education system. Effective this fall, school councils will have the right to make recommendations to the principal or school board on any other matter. Principals and boards will be required to seek the views of school councils in a number of important programs and policy areas and to report back on actions taken in response to school council recommendations.

On May 7, Minister Ecker announced a package of initiatives to enable school boards to continue to make improvements for the coming school year. Subject to the approval of the Legislature, where required, this package will include more flexibility for school boards regarding resource allocation, instructional time and remedial help, and \$50 million more that school boards can use to address their own priorities.

We're doing a lot of good things. As part of the 21 steps into the 21st century outlined in last month's throne speech, we proposed several additional measures to support increased accountability and choice in education. These measures include the expansion of standardized student testing, uniformity in education, and there are many programs.

I'm sure other members would like to take part in the debate.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** I'm very happy to speak to this resolution standing in the name of Dalton McGuinty.

Let me say very clearly to the people who live in Windsor West that I am very strongly opposed to a private school tax credit. My community of Windsor is second only to the city of Toronto by nature of its great diversity. How many multicultural groups live within the confines of my riding and in all of Windsor-Essex county? Some 94 different languages can be found in the heart of Windsor West. Mine is a riding that has benefited tremendously from a strong public education system, and the waves of immigration that come to the shores of Canada today are no different than those that came in all the waves of the 1920s, the early 1900s, the 1950s. In fact, a huge group that lives in Windsor, the Italians, came mostly in the 1950s.

The one great leveller for the people who came to our community was the public education system. We knew then that when we grew up speaking Italian in our home, we started speaking English when we went to school, and we went to a public education system that treated all of us as equals. I knew, growing up on Elsmere Avenue, that it didn't matter how much money my family had, it didn't matter where my family came from; I had the equal opportunity, as any other family in my riding, to excel in Ontario.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre):** Did you learn your Catholic religion in the school?

**Mrs Pupatello:** In my view, what this government is doing by changing so dramatically the philosophy, siphoning such a huge amount of money away from public education and into private schools, undermines the very fundamental reason why Windsor and Ontario have become as tolerant as they have been.

*Interjection.*

**Mrs Pupatello:** I am embarrassed that a member opposite would dare heckle on an important matter such as this, a member especially whose history is very much like my own.

I can tell you that those community groups that are in my community will attest to a wonderful working relationship with all groups. There is no reason anywhere that this government could find that would be rationale to explain why we, as government, would encourage segregating communities anywhere, any time. This is what this does to the children of Ontario.

In my community, I grew up and went to school sitting desk by desk with Muslims, with Greek Orthodox, with Italian Catholics. All of us were equals in the same classroom, and when I went to a public school, namely Kennedy high school, I went to school with Muslims and Greek Orthodox and Italian Catholics, and we were all the same, given the same opportunity.

What this government is doing is significantly shifting education policy in Ontario. It is a thing that Mike Harris said during the last election that he would not do. The general public looked at him and believed him, and he is now doing other than that.

What I am telling this government is that it is fundamentally wrong to propose any kind of government policy that would segregate communities, that would actually encourage parents to take their children into another, separated school. It's just wrong. The one reason why we are as tolerant as we are is because we know each other.

I do not buy the argument that it's a question of fairness. I think it's an issue of tolerance, and this government does not encourage tolerance. In fact, since this debate began, it has become very apparent that what this government is doing is fuelling the fires of division. You are fuelling the fires of division between groups, between who ought to benefit and prosper in this great province of ours. This is what will be laid at the feet of the Ontario government when we go into the next election, that you would actually choose to move the \$500 million to \$700 million—which is an amount named by the Premier himself—that this could cost our system. Not only do we lose it from the provincial treasury, but every student who moves from the public system will take with him or her the pupil grant that goes to that public school. That's what this government is proposing. You take the best parents away from parent councils for the general public system. That's just wrong. We can't support that kind of notion.

This party, the Ontario Liberal Party, and Dalton McGuinty support working families in Ontario that promote tolerance, that promote a good public education

system for all children. No matter where you come from, you get the same great opportunity to live in Ontario.

1740

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** I've got to tell you, Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in support of this opposition day motion. At the same time I am very disappointed with the government and the policy they have recently put forward which would transfer \$500 million out of public education over to private schools.

It seems to me that government members have apparently lost sight of this heavy responsibility we all share as elected representatives who enjoy the privilege of sitting in this Legislature. We have a very heavy responsibility to protect public education for future generations. If you stop and think about the contribution of public education to our province in terms of our prosperity, our general well-being, a sense of civility, strong citizenship, virtually all of that emanates from public education, which has been supported over the decades by different governments of different political stripes. But this government has made its determined effort during the course of the past six years to kick the stuffing out of public education, and our kids are paying a terrible price for that.

You need only to take the time and travel this province and speak to parents in whatever community and they will tell you that something has gone terribly wrong inside public education. The way they experience it is in terms of loss of enthusiasm in their classrooms. They see it in stressed-out teachers. They see overcrowded classrooms, especially for their younger children. They've experienced a loss of extracurricular activities, something which is of tremendous importance to our young people in their teenage years. I can say that as a parent of teenagers. It's something that I consider an essential part of their education.

We've got 35,000 children who are on waiting lists—some as long as 24 months—for a psychological assessment so that we can better understand what their special learning needs are before we can then put them into some kind of program which helps address those needs.

I'm describing the state of public education today in Ontario. We've got 42% of elementary schools where parents are engaged in vigorous efforts to raise money to buy textbooks and computers. That's what public education is today. This is the status quo which this government has delivered to us. In that context, what does the government want to do now? They want to come to the rescue of public education by taking \$500 million out and putting it into private schools. That's what this government wants to do. According to this government, we might as well post a notice over all public schools compliments of Mike Harris and his government. The notice would read, "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here."

We've got a different take on public education. We want to champion public education for all of our working

families right across the province. I can tell you, something that we are very much looking forward to in government is taking responsibility for public education. We're not going to blame trustees, as is the habit of this government, or teachers, as is equally the habit of this government, or parents or even our children. We're going to take responsibility for bringing about real improvement in public education. We're going to inspire confidence in the minds of our parents and of that great majority of Ontarians who have no real connection any longer with public education.

There are so many good things happening in public education today. Gerard Kennedy, our education critic, instituted this wonderful program where he invited all members to take some time out of their schedules and spend it inside a school. You cannot do that and not come to understand better some of the challenges that our society has to contend with—parents, teachers and students—when it comes to delivering quality education, but, at the same time, you will quickly come to understand that there are so many darn good things happening in public education. But to listen to this government, you'd think it had all gone to hell in a handbasket. What do they do, again, in that context? After working so hard to create that image that public education is terrible, they invite parents to abandon it. They say, "We will pay you, in fact, to leave public education."

We've got a different take on it. We've got a plan to improve public education. I want to describe some of that. The crown jewel in that plan is a real cap on class sizes. We want no more than 20 children in every Ontario classroom, from junior kindergarten through to and including grade 3. Experts around the world tell us that the single most important thing that we could do to bring about real improvement in learning—and that's what it's all about at the end of the day, improvement in learning for our children—would be to make sure, especially in the early years, that they get more individual attention. Children who enjoy that benefit perform better academically, they are better behaved, they are more likely to finish their high school, more likely to go on to college and university, more likely to go on and get a better-paying job. All of that starts at the beginning and that component of our plan, in fact the entire plan, costs less than the \$500 million that this government would take out of public education and turn over to private schools.

The other aspect of our plan is this concept that we're especially proud of called lighthouse schools. It would enable our schools which are excelling in one area or another, whether that might be in terms of their students performing well academically, having a fantastic athletics program, having some outstanding parental involvement program, having an anti-bullying program, you name it—wherever there's any kind of excellence, we want to recognize it and we want to give that school some additional funding on one condition, that they share that best practice with other schools in the public system. That way we can work to ensure that all schools right across the system rise up together. Contrast that approach with a

government that would quite proudly take \$500 million out of public education and turn it over to private schools. We want to help our schools, not rob them of necessary funding.

The other part of our plan is turnaround teams. Some of our schools are experiencing some challenges. Rather than looking for ways to punish them or looking for ways to encourage parents to leave those schools, we think we should be lending them a hand. So we would assemble together a team of experts who would spend some time in schools that are having some special challenges. They'd go in there and they'd bring together the very best advice and guidance and counselling that they possibly could so that we could get that school back on the rails and inspire confidence in parents. It seems to me that as a government committed to public education for all our children, that's the kind of idea that they would want to adopt, that they'd want to run with, and they are more than welcome to do so.

The other thing that this government lost sight of long ago is that you can't bring about substantive improvement in learning for our children unless you enlist the support, the expertise and the goodwill of our teachers. The single most important resource in the classroom is not the computer and it's not the textbook and it's not whatever kind of writing implements or technology kids might use today. It's the teacher. It's the individual who stands at the front of the classroom, the individual who is on all day. We've got to start supporting our teachers in Ontario and we've got to start encouraging young people in high school today to consider a career in education. As we try to develop a knowledge-based economy here so that we can compete with the world's best, surely it's time for us to place a high value on those who happen to transfer knowledge on our behalf: our teachers. We're proud of our teachers. There's always room for improvement, and we've got a plan to help them improve what it is that they do in the classroom.

I want the government to understand, but more importantly I want Ontarians to understand, that there is a party in this Legislature that is absolutely committed to public education, for all the right reasons, that there is a party that is here working on behalf of our working families and all our kids in every corner of this province, and that we will never, ever stop fighting for those families and those kids.

1750

**Mr Spina:** He can't even convince his own caucus to be unanimous on this issue, never mind the rest of the province. This party supports public education. You want to talk about kicking the stuffing out of education? There's \$9 billion to \$14 billion in funding to the public education system. That's the stuffing we put into it.

Tax credits are not vouchers. That's what you're all about: two-faced. Tax credits are not vouchers. Not a nickel has come out of the public education—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member held up a placard or

some kind of thing, and my understanding of the rules of the Legislature is that that's not allowed in the standing orders.

### *Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Sterling:** On the point of order, Mr Speaker: This member has had the opportunity to speak for about a minute and 42 seconds. The opposition has continued to shout, has continued to interrupt his speech during all of that period. I would ask you to restore that time to him so he can use that time properly.

### *Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** When I'm up, you're down. Thank you. I will restore a minute of the time. The member for Brampton Centre.

**Mr Spina:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. There has not been any money removed from the public education system. In fact, two weeks prior to the budget, the Minister of Education announced a \$360-million increase in the funding for the publicly funded system. Furthermore, I repeat that tax credits are not vouchers. They are completely different.

The member talks about the working families of Ontario. I give to him the example of John Knox Christian School in Brampton where Walter Veenstra, the president of Holland Christian Homes, said, "Thank you to the Harris government for the tax credits because our members, our families, earn \$40,000 to \$60,000 a year, and that's the tax credit we appreciate."

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time for debate has expired. Mr Kennedy has moved, on behalf of Mr McGuinty, opposition day number 3.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The bells rang from 1755 to 1805*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Di Cocco, Caroline	McGuinty, Dalton
Bartolucci, Rick	Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn
Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	McMekin, Ted
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gerretsen, John	Parsons, Emie
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Cleary, John C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramsay, David
Colle, Mike	Lankin, Frances	Ruprecht, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Levac, David	Sergio, Mario
Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	Marteil, Shelley	
Curling, Alvin	Martin, Tony	

**The Deputy Speaker:** Those opposed will please rise one at a time until recognized by the Clerk.

Navy

Baird, John R.  
Beaubien, Marcel  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clark, Brad  
Coburn, Brian  
DeFaria, Carl  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Ecker, Janet  
Elliott, Brenda  
Galt, Doug  
Gilchrist, Steve  
Gill, Raminder  
Guzzo, Garry J.  
Hardeman, Ermie  
Harris, Michael D.  
Hastings, John  
Hudak, Tim  
Jackson, Cameron  
Kells, Morley  
Klees, Frank  
Marland, Margaret  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Maves, Bart  
Mazzilli, Frank  
Miller, Norm  
Molinari, Tina R.  
Munro, Julia  
Murdoch, Bill  
Mushinski, Marilyn  
Newman, Dan  
O'Toole, John  
Ouellette, Jerry J.  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Spina, Joseph  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Stewart, R. Gary  
Stockwell, Chris  
Tascona, Joseph N.  
Tilson, David  
Tsubouchi, David H.  
Turnbull, David  
Wettlaufer, Wayne  
Wilson, Jim  
Wood, Bob  
Young, David

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 37; the nays are 45.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

It being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

## *The House adjourned at 1809.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergeant d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Ancaster-Dundas-	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)
Flamborough-Aldershot		Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Beaches-East York	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Hastings-Frontenac-	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Lennox and Addington	
Springdale		Huron-Bruce	
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)		
Brampton West-Mississauga /	<b>Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony</b> (PC)		<b>Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Health and Long-Term Care) / ministre sans portefeuille (Santé et Soins de longue durée)
Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée		Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)		Gerretsen, John (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)		
Burlington	<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron</b> (PC)		
	Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées		
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Lanark-Carleton	
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)		
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)		
Don Valley West / -Ouest	<b>Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David</b> (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	
	Solicitor General / solliciteur général		
Dufferin-Peel-	Tilson, David (PC)		
Wellington-Grey			
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	London North Centre /	
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	London-Centre-Nord	
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)		
Erie-Lincoln	<b>Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim</b> (PC)		
	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Loisirs		
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)	London West / -Ouest	
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC)	London-Fanshawe	
	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Markham	
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)		
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	
Guelph-Wellington	<b>Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda</b> (PC)		
	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales		
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Mississauga East / -Est	
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	
	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Mississauga West / -Ouest	

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nepean-Carleton	<b>Baird, Hon / L'hon John R.</b> (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué au dossier de l'Enfance, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Scarborough East / -Est Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	Scarborough-Agincourt	<b>Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan</b> (PC)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Nipissing	<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.</b> (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif	Simcoe-Grey	Curling, Alvin (L)
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	St Catharines	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Oak Ridges	<b>Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip, deputy government House leader / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement, leader parlementaire adjoint	St Paul's	<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Oakville	<b>Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary</b> (PC) Speaker / Président	Stoney Creek	Bradley, James J. (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Bryant, Michael (L)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	<b>Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad</b> (PC)
Ottawa-Orléans	<b>Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian</b> (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales	Thornhill	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Cleary, John C. (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Molinari, Tina R. (PC)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Ramsay, David (L)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Waterloo-Wellington	Smitherman, George (L)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet</b> (PC) Minister of Education, government House leader / ministre de l'Éducation, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Whitby-Ajax	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Willowdale	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Arnot, Ted (PC)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor-St Clair	<b>Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	York Centre / -Centre	<b>Young, Hon / L'hon David</b> (PC)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	York North / -Nord	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Duncan, Dwight (L)
		Vaughan-King-Aurora	Kwinter, Monte (L)
			Munro, Julia (PC)
			Cordiano, Joseph (L)
			Sergio, Mario (L)
			Vacant

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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Government  
Publications



No. 20B

Nº 20B

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario**  
Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**  
Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 29 May 2001**

**Mardi 29 mai 2001**



**Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr**

**Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr**

**Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers**

**Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers**

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Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 29 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 29 mai 2001

*The House met at 1845.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### RESPONSIBLE CHOICES FOR GROWTH AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (2001 BUDGET), 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR DES CHOIX RÉFLÉCHIS FAVORISANT LA CROISSANCE ET LA RESPONSABILISATION (BUDGET DE 2001)

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 28, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 45, An Act to implement measures contained in the 2001 Budget and to amend various statutes / Projet de loi 45, Loi mettant en œuvre des mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 2001 et modifiant diverses lois.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr David Christopherson):** The Chair recognizes the member for Trinity-Spadina to resume the leadoff debate for the third party.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I just want to say to the good citizens of Ontario that it's a quarter to 7. I have 42 minutes. Would that we had more time to debate, but we don't have time to debate as much as we would like because this government, as you know, has squeezed the opposition so much in terms of our inability to say what we need to say. I will have approximately 20 minutes or less for my remarks in order to allow our other colleagues to have—

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member for Trinity-Spadina I'm sure knows it's very important to have a quorum call to see if there is a quorum in the House to listen to what I'm sure will be very interesting remarks from my colleague.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum?

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Trinity-Spadina will continue, please.

**Mr Marchese:** Thank you, Speaker, and I thank you, member for Hamilton East, for that. I often engage the Conservative members because, as I was saying yester-

day, it's the only opportunity we have to talk to them. They don't talk to us at any other time. I am always patient with their remarks. I like the dialogue with the other members because dialogue is important. If we don't get it in this place, where else are we going to get it? Because we don't get hearings any more.

Good citizens of Ontario, welcome to a political forum at a quarter to 7 on Tuesday night. After much pressing of this government on hearings, they relented today. The Minister of Education and the Premier must have had a little chat, because the caucus didn't have a chance to discuss this, I'm afraid. They decided it this morning before they even had their caucus meeting. We were there. M<sup>me</sup> Ecker came at around 10:15 and said, "We're going to have hearings." So clearly, M<sup>me</sup> Ecker and M. Harris met and said—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** What is it? There are some people who just don't want to listen. I know. I understand. That's why I always address myself to you, good citizens, because I know that while I say I like the dialogue with the Conservative members—who are leaving one by one. That's OK. I really don't mind because I'm talking to you directly. I don't need to talk to them. You are the citizens who need to listen to our discussions, our concerns, and hopefully we will be able to engage you, as I know we have, because there are a whole lot of Ontarians who are concerned about the measure this government has introduced, an incredible direction, a position that is radically different from what they claimed in 1999. In fact, they never announced in their election platform that they would fund private education. It was never part of their platform in 1999. Now here they come and claim yes, it was, yes, they did say it, yes, they're for fairness and yes, they're for choice. They can say whatever they like, and they do. They seem—I say "seem" because I'm not sure about what you, good taxpayers, are saying out there, but if I have any inkling from having just this evening spoken to five people from, believe it or not, the Brampton area, God bless Brampton—or Burlington. Sorry, people from Brampton—from Burlington. This is an area of Conservative support, you understand. There isn't just one signature on these petitions. Every petition is full of names. We're talking about Brampton. We're talking about Burlington. We're talking about all these Conservative areas where they traditionally have done so well.

With this particular measure, we are seeing clear opposition to the idea of public dollars for private

schools. While I am not certain about the level of disenchantment with this government, I am convinced this government has made a mistake in terms of its interest and desire to support private schools, religious schools and private non-denominational schools.

**1850**

We've been pressing for public hearings. For a week and a half we said, "This direction is so completely new, we demand public hearings." This morning, M<sup>me</sup> Ecker said, "OK, we're going to give you a couple of weeks." We thought that was interesting. I think it's a good thing they relented, because clearly they know they've got a problem. They can't shut out the debate, because it's too significant a change to simply say to the public, "We don't need to hear you." They had to relent and this morning they said, "OK, we're going to give you hearings," but this afternoon M. Harris said, "Yes, we want input on the implementation of Bill 45, on the implementation of public funds for private schools." He wasn't saying, "We want to hear from you, good citizens, about whether or not you're opposed to the measure." What he said clearly, and what M<sup>me</sup> Ecker has been saying for the last week and a half, is, what they want is advice from you on the implementation of this bill.

Does that sound like consultation to you? No, it isn't consultation. It isn't coming out to you, the public, to listen to your voice, your possible opposition to this, so that once having heard your opposition, good God, this government might decide that perhaps it would be best not to introduce such a bill, to in fact take it back. That's what they ought to be doing. The measure is so completely new and different and so much in the face of a great deal of opposition that this government should not be taking a position in advance of the hearings. But that's what Harris did this afternoon, and I think it's wrong.

This afternoon, I heard Conservative members saying, "We have put millions and millions of dollars into the education system." Right, Joe Spina from Brampton Centre?

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** They've been saying on the other side they have put billions of dollars into the education system. You all heard that, right? You guys heard it, right? I was here; I heard it. The people up there watching these proceedings heard the member saying that a couple of billion dollars has been put into the education system. My argument is, if you've been putting \$2 billion into the education system, why are people so unhappy? Why are parents so angry about the loss of so much in our education system? I tell you, if you put in \$2 billion, there would be some evidence of some consumer, as you would say, satisfaction, or client satisfaction, wouldn't there? Joe, wouldn't there?

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre):** I don't have a problem.

**Mr Marchese:** I know you've got a problem.

**Mr Spina:** I don't have a problem.

**Mr Marchese:** Yes, you do, Joe, and I'm going to tell you why. Here's a survey that was done. I want to show you how your \$2 billion—

**Mr Spina:** Who did it?

**Mr Marchese:** Oh, it really doesn't matter. Oh, you can contest it. I understand you would contest it, but let me read some of the numbers, Joe.

**Mr Spina:** What was that example?

**Mr Marchese:** I'm getting older, Joe, I need these glasses. Look at this, it's so sad. Here we are, number of participating schools: 940 schools in 68 of the 72 boards in Ontario. That's a whole lot of schools, 940 schools out of 68 of the 72 boards in Ontario. So out of 68 boards, that's a lot of schools. It's almost 1,000 schools. That's a lot of schools, right?

Here's what they represent: 24% of the elementary schools in the province; these are the ones that are participating, because some are not. School size: 54% have fewer than 350 students. Principals: 85% have a full-time principal, down 10% since 1997-98; 15% have a part-time principal. Class sizes: 58% of classes have 25 or fewer students. English as a second language: 44% have ESL programs, down 34%. Specialist teachers—

**Mr Spina:** So what's the class average?

**Mr Marchese:** I'm not sure you need that. Specialist teachers: 37% have gym teachers, down 10% since 1997-98; 56% have music teachers—in this regard, no significant change of the schools that called in, which is good—14% have visual arts teachers, which is down 18%; 13% have design and technology teachers, which is down 48%; 20% have guidance teachers, down 35%.

On to library: 68% have qualified teacher-librarians, down 15%; 40% are staffed at times by volunteers, up 40%; 14% are staffed by students—God bless. Computer technology per school: an average of 47 computers, of which 27 have CD ROMs, 28 have Internet access and 10 have printers. This is for your information.

**Mr Spina:** Give us that number.

**Mr Marchese:** Well, I give it. If it doesn't say down or up, I give it. Textbooks: 66% reported students must share textbooks.

**Mr Spina:** That's probably down from 80%.

**Mr Marchese:** What, you think this is good? It says 66% reported students must share textbooks. That's a whole lot of students sharing textbooks.

**Mr Spina:** Yes, but it used to be 80.

**Mr Marchese:** Oh, Giuseppe, I don't think so. Some 65% reported worn or out-of-date textbooks, worn or out of date. God bless.

Volunteer participation: schools reported an average of 141 hours per month are being volunteered; 88% report using volunteers on field trips; 89% report using them in classroom; 25% report using them in the office; 13% report using them for lunchtime supervision.

Fundraising: schools reported raising from zero to \$75,000. Province wide, parents in elementary schools raised approximately \$30 million. Much of it was spent on essentials.

**Mr Spina:** You're totally out of context.

**Mr Marchese:** Joe, now listen—

**Mr Spina:** You're out of context.

**Mr Marchese:** No, I'm not. Much of it was spent on essentials; 18% was spent on textbooks, 49% was spent on computers and software, classroom supplies was 42% and library resources was 50%.

**Mr Spina:** Compared to what?

**Mr Marchese:** Compared to what? Compared to a good economy. You've taken \$2 billion out. That's what it's compared to.

Psychologists: 9% reported no psychologists available to students. Social workers: 19% reported no social worker available to students. Compared to what, right, Joe? Meaning there are no social workers in these places; there ought to be, right?

Speech pathologists: 4% reported no speech pathologist available to kids.

Community use of schools: 84% reported community use of school buildings; 40% reported user fees for community use. That's up 25%.

Busing: 85% reported busing of some of their students; 20% reported longest one-day trip as one hour or more.

**1900**

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** No. It was exhausting. Good citizens of Ontario, I read such a list as a way of telling you—does this list that I gave you sound like two billion bucks have been put into the educational system? I am telling you, good citizens—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Brampton Centre.

**Mr Marchese:** —that what I have read to you sounds like two billion bucks has been taken out of the educational system. I know, Joe Spina, you're saying, "It's not true," but I'm telling you that real people, real people with real concerns in classrooms and those involved with classrooms, report we've got serious problems in the educational system. I just want to say that this statistical information belies what this government says.

**Mr Spina:** Pardon?

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Of course it is. It belies—

**The Acting Speaker:** Excuse me just one second. The member from Brampton Centre, this is twice. This is my first time in the chair. Please don't let it end in something more serious than it needs to. I would ask you to please give the member the floor.

The member will please resume.

**Mr Marchese:** Thank you, Speaker, for your kindness. Good to have you there.

As I was saying, Joe, two billion bucks taken out of the educational system. You can't but notice it. And only a Tory ideologue would say, "No, that's not true. We put in money"—only a Tory ideologue and their sympathizers, although I think it's a diminishing number of sympathizers.

I want to say to you that I feel a bit sorry for M<sup>me</sup> Ecker these days. I do; I don't know about you. But

here's M<sup>me</sup> Ecker's quote: "We've been very clear," she said six months ago or so, "that our goal is a good quality public education, and the estimates of \$300 million needed to fund religious schools would be \$300 million that would come out of the public school system." It could not be clearer, David. It could not be clearer, the quote. She said we cannot take \$300 million out of the public system to fund private schools, religious schools. I didn't say it; M<sup>me</sup> Ecker said it. These are not my words. These were her words, as M. Stockwell used to say when he was here on the other side. He would wave little papers and would say, "I didn't say it; you did." And that's what I say to Janet Ecker, the Minister of Education: I didn't say that; you said it, and so did your Premier. He said the same thing. In fact, he said it wouldn't be \$300 million, that it would be \$500 million.

Now, I expect this of the Liberals, but the Tories? Good God, people think of you as much more principally to the right and more principled on the right. But when I hear Tories do this, I squirm, because I've got a term for it, right? And my term is usually "reptilian" to describe that particular nature of the political personality that is able to say one thing today and deny it the next. You understand, David.

So I feel bad for M<sup>me</sup> Ecker, because I see her every day in the Legislature pretending she doesn't hear that quote, pretending and wishing, "My God, did I say it? Why did I say it? Why did the Premier make me say it? Why did he say it?"

"Why did we say it?" she's saying, and today she has to pretend that she never said it. The Premier has to pretend that he never said it. Every day M<sup>me</sup> Ecker, la pauvre M<sup>me</sup> Ecker, has to hide, cower and hope that they don't beat her up on this quote. It would be hard for me if somebody said, "Marchese, you said this then." Knowing that I had said it, how would I be able to cope with denying it? And she's not able to cope with denying it because, alas, she did say it. And she did believe it then.

Poor M<sup>me</sup> Ecker. M. Flaherty outflanked her. Unbeknownst to her, he put in his finance budget this tax credit. I tell you, if I was the finance minister and did that to another minister, it would take some—how shall I say it so it would be acceptable?—muscular fortitude, right? It would, and he did. Quite clearly Flaherty did it unbeknownst to the minister, and there she is, squirming on her own, having to defend a policy that M. Flaherty, the finance minister, did all on his little own.

I feel bad for so many of the other Tory members, when unbeknownst to them Flaherty introduces this measure. I am certain many of you squirmed deeply inside, because I know you personally are offended by this. You can't say it? How can you say to the public, "We are in opposition to M. Flaherty, to the Premier"? You can't say it. I know that; I was in government and know you don't do that. While we had Mr Kormos who, God bless his soul, stood by party policy all the time and reminded the public, we don't have too many Tories doing that. We don't have too many Tories doing that kind of thing, as we had with Kormos in our party,

reminding us of our party policy. Would that we had a few Tories, strong men and women, who would stand up to Flaherty and to the Premier with this measure that takes us in a completely different direction.

You ought to be supporting public education. You ought to be saying, "Yes, it's \$300 million that will come out of the public system. Yes, we took \$2 billion and this will be yet another \$3 billion to \$4 billion or \$5 billion. Yes, this will encourage more private schools to spawn."

This is not for the very wealthy. They don't need your measly \$3,000. People who send their children to Upper Canada College, who spend anywhere from \$16,000 to \$28,000, do you think they need your \$3,000? No. More thousands of little schools, middle schools, will spring up where the tuition fees will be \$5,000 to \$6,000. That's what will emerge, and more money will come out of our public system.

New Democrats are unequivocal: we're opposed to public dollars for private schools and we believe public schools ought to be inclusionary, must be inclusionary, and can accommodate our religious and cultural differences. We cannot splinter, segment and fragment our system by funding private schools and religious schools. We urge the Liberals to be very clear in their positions when they speak to this,

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Do they? Yes, they oppose tax credits, but do they support other religious schools? If they do, they need to say it, because New Democrats are unequivocal: we are for a public system and for every public dollar to go back to our public system.

With that, Speaker, I leave you the remaining time this evening to complete the remarks on this bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I would like to thank the member for his, I would think, passionate comments, to say the least. I have some concerns with some of the things he said, but our fight is with the government across the way and the ill-conceived notion they have that they're preserving public education while in fact they're attacking it in the cruellest of ways: withdrawing money from the public system to give their friends a tax credit. It's that simple and it's wrong.

This budget fails the people of Ontario in so many different ways. In the health care field hospitals are crying for more money to provide the services that people need in Ontario. The reality is that this government refuses to commit the necessary dollars. So of course I'm in support of the Ontario Hospital Association campaign to raise awareness of how this government is under-funding hospitals in Ontario.

Today we talked about community care access centres not being able to give their clients the services they need. We're not talking about people who have the resources to provide services for themselves; we're talking about frail, elderly people who have paid their entire life into a system with the hope that when they needed the system, the system would be there. This government, through this

budget and their actions, have failed those frail, elderly people in the cruellest of ways.

I would suggest to the people of Ontario that when they hear the rhetoric of this government, it is pure rhetoric. The fact is, Ontarians are hurting.

1910

**The Acting Speaker:** Further speakers?

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and congratulations on your position in the chair this evening. I understand it's your first time in the chair and I congratulate you.

I'd like to respond a little bit to the comments from the member for the New Democratic Party. I understand how passionate you are with your concerns on the tax credit portion of the budget. However, I hope you will understand the importance of our role as the government of Ontario in providing a balanced budget for the third year in a row—the first time, I believe, that this has happened in almost 100 years in this House.

As you know, in our role as the government, we have to find a little over \$63 billion to operate the province of Ontario. With that \$63 billion we need to keep a strong economy so that you can sit over there and criticize us for health care spending and education spending and everything you can possibly find wrong. The fact of the matter is, we have to keep this economy strong at all times. That is how we receive the revenues to make Ontario strong and create jobs so that people will be able to afford tax credits in the future, or be able to afford homes to pay property tax on, to buy cars, so that everyone here in this House will have an opportunity, so that everyone in our families and everyone in our communities that we represent will have the income and the revenue to support a very strong Ontario economy.

I understand there was a lot of conversation this afternoon on the Leader of the Opposition's resolution. I thought we had talked fairly clearly on the tax credit issue. You know how our government feels. We're very supportive of this. Our constituents are telling us they've needed this for some time, and I'm pleased to be part of a government that supports the tax credits.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane):** I'm pleased to add my comments on this debate tonight. It's important that members stand up and give with some clarity where they stand on the public education issue. I think it's very important for members to know that the Liberal Party believes in a public education system.

The Minister of Education will say, "You don't believe in choice." We do believe in choice, but we don't believe the government should pay for that choice. It is a free country and if you want to send your children to another school, you're free to do that, but I don't believe public taxpayers' dollars should go to fund that choice, and that's the way it is.

People then will bring up the Catholic system. The Catholic system is there as part of our history, as part of our Constitution. Right now we're having this debate because the United Nations and other organizations will say that is discriminatory, because we fund a public sys-

tem, and a religious system only for one religion. I think that's the debate we're going to have to have down the road, about how we fund the public education system.

But right now we have that as a constitutional guarantee, and I think the only way that would be resolved is through a public discussion. Probably, like Newfoundland, we would have to have a vote in this province. I'm not sure we're ready for that yet, but I think politicians of all stripes will probably have to address that issue some day, because we have an issue here that a lot of groups in society feel is not fair, that we fund a public secular system and a public religious system for one religion only.

I think this debate really reflects the debate on how you see this country. Do we see this country as a group of segregated entities, or do you come to Canada to come together to be Canadians, under this flag, in this country, not bringing the arguments and disputes you have in the old country, but coming together and building a new country together. That's what I believe about this country.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm not sure what the sequence here is, but I think the member for Trinity-Spadina has a two-minute wrap-up.

In the interest of showing respect, he always is enthusiastic. The member is always entertaining and I believe quite genuine in his commitment to public education, as am I, I might say, having been a school trustee for a couple of terms, as well as having a spouse who is a teacher and one of my daughters is a high school teacher. I can tell you as a parent of five children that it's absolutely critical that we have the highest-quality education system in this province.

I think the debate tonight is on Bill 45 in a broader sense. I will be speaking next and I don't want to use up all of my particularly salient points. I'm really rising to pay respect to the member's comments and to respect his position as a clear defender of public education and not offering choice. That's his choice. In fact it's his party's position. They have been clear. I think where the ambivalence occurs is that clearly the Liberals are all things to all people. That chameleon kind of presence is intolerable, it's unacceptable, and people aren't as gullible as they would lead us to believe.

We're seeing evidence of that in Ottawa today. There's no question in my mind that they will put through, irrespective of the public view, an inordinate salary increase in Ottawa.

**Mr Ramsay:** You had better be careful of what you speak.

**Mr O'Toole:** No, I say to the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane that there is a party over there that has very deep-rooted principles and that had some tough decisions to make between 1990 and 1995. I've looked at the history. I was serving as a regional councillor at the time. I'm probably here today because I was opposed to things like the social contract and other difficult decisions that they, in their time, had to make. I think this government is doing the best we can to serve the people of Ontario.

### The Acting Speaker: A two-minute response.

**Mr Marchese:** I thank the members for their comments. To respond to the member from Simcoe North when he says, "The economy must keep strong," I agree. Who disagrees with that? But why would you weaken everything society and its members demand and expect? Why would you weaken our education system in the way you have? Why would you beat it up in the way you have for the last six years, taking out two billion bucks? You don't keep an economy strong by weakening our health care system and our education system. You weaken our economy and our culture by taking \$6 billion to \$12 billion by the end of the next year for tax cuts to the corporate sector and to individual special friends of yours who don't need the money. You're doing it at the expense of these people who have come here to listen to the debate, people from Burlington who came to bring petitions here with hundreds of names of people in Burlington. It wasn't hard to get the names of people in Burlington to say, "We're opposed to public dollars for private schools." It didn't take much.

We're talking about Tories in those areas understanding and realizing that you are weakening our education system. People in London and Guelph are sending a clear message to you that they don't agree with you. You are wrong, in my view. Ecker was right six months ago when she said it would take \$300 million out of our public system to fund religious schools. Ecker, you were right then. What happened to you? What happened to you, Premier, when you said it would take \$500 million out of our education system? You were right then, Premier. What happened to you? Now Flaherty has left the Minister of Education on her own to defend a policy she doesn't agree with, la pauvre M<sup>me</sup> Ecker, on her own, and all these other Conservative members who are left to defend a policy they don't support.

We are for a public education system that is inclusive and that accommodates all of our differences. That's what New Democrats stand for.

### The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

**Mr O'Toole:** It's my pleasure tonight to rise and share my time with the member from—anyway, there are two other members I'll be sharing my time with. I'm not too sure. I don't have the order paper in front of me. The member from Simcoe North is one of those who I believe will be speaking. At least he has expressed that interest.

Bill 45 is the bill we're actually debating. It is rather a large instrument, and I believe it's important for the viewers tonight to understand and appreciate the scope. The scope is far broader than the specific debate we've heard to this point. I believe there are 22 different sections in the bill that amend current statutes to support the budget initiatives. I can tell you, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, that there were extensive public hearings to come up with this framework document, the budget, which is the instrument by which we are allowed to allocate resources throughout the province to serve the people of Ontario.

**1920**

An important way of beginning the debate on Bill 45, from my perspective, is to start at the beginning and to really firmly appreciate the important strategy of this government and, to even drive that down further, that it is for ordinary Ontarians, of which I'm one. The people of my riding of Durham I believe represent all that's good about Ontario. There are agricultural people, there are people in fast-growing young families, and a lot of pressure on the school systems to build more and more schools.

My children spent most of their education in portables. All five, fortunately, have received a decent education. In fact, most have graduated from university or are in the process of graduating, and as I said earlier, one of my middle daughters is a high school teacher.

The pressure on this government to meet the growing expectations is phenomenal. We're at a time in the economy—and I think this is what Finance Minister Flaherty said—to look at the reality of where we are. There is a bump in the road, and some of the numbers that I will speak to during the small amount of time that's allocated to me will indicate that we're going off numbers of about 5.6% growth and we're coming down to numbers of 2% to 3% GDP growth. Each per cent represents almost \$600 million in revenue, so for every per cent change in the GDP from 5.5% down to, let's say, 2.5%—I think the actual numbers are 2.2%—that's a significant revenue consideration and an expenditure on the other side. Again, driving it down to fundamentals, we are committed to balanced budget legislation and to finding fairness in the allocation of the resources.

Clearly, in the three weeks that we travelled this province—and there were members from all parties involved. Mr Phillips was involved, and you, Mr Speaker, at that time as the finance critic for the NDP, were involved in those public consultations. We did hear from people on serious, serious social issues, some of which we hear about here in question period. I think whether it's children's treatment centres or whether it's more money for hospitals or more money for education or more money for culture and tourism, we've heard all of it—the homelessness issue, right across the board. There were no filters involved.

There were presentations from the independent school groups in those public consultations, I might say. They are not new. In fact, when I was a school trustee in 1982-85, there was relentless pressure to address the perceived inequities in public education at that time. It has not changed. That's the record. I was involved in the provincial parent association in 1980, and the same issue of equity was in question then. Are we going to address the issue of equity, as the United Nations and others have demanded, or is it going to be the entrenchment of the current status quo? That is the question, and it's a question of fairness and a question of parent choice.

But I've allowed myself to be drawn into the immediacy of that debate because it has received a lot of attention and, I might say, about 9-to-1 support in my riding

of Durham. In my riding there are five independent schools today that have survived, and most of the parents support those schools. They serve voluntarily on the boards of those schools, and on the boards are hard-working, middle-class people who want the very best quality, values-based education. I use the word "values" because it crosses all frontiers. People from many different backgrounds chose, from Catholics to Baptists to I think people who are just looking for values within a school system.

But I want to go back to how all of this is addressing the demands that we heard in the public hearings and about three hearing levels after the public hearings, where the minister and stakeholders would meet, trying to determine what the ultimate priorities will be. Clearly there was a tremendous amount of demand: pressures on the health care system; tremendous demands on the environmental equation, not just Walkerton but, in a broader sense, far more awareness by the public on clean air, water and soil. There was a lot of emphasis on the importance of some of the shared services between levels of government. One of them may have been housing that received a fair amount of attention. All levels of government are on record as saying all three parties have to be involved.

Now, I still want to establish the premise on which our budget and the discussion on Bill 45—its mode of operation or its vision, if you will. It comes down to four important points that must be clearly embraced before anyone can get through all the rhetoric of the debate.

The importance of having a strong economy: this may sound redundant or rhetorical, but if you don't embrace the importance of having a strong economy that generates wealth, you're in trouble. If you need any evidence of that, all you need to look at are large Third World countries like Brazil and China, where they have no ability to develop capital. This is an economics argument of the simplest order, but without the ability to have a strong economy, governments themselves, and, for that matter, the greater good for the greater number and the public, cannot possibly survive. I look at countries like Brazil that have a tremendous comparative base in many respects to Canada but do not have the ability to support the infrastructure of lifestyle or quality of life. I've been there personally, and I know that to some extent there are a lot of gaps in the infrastructure between the very well-off and those who have absolutely nothing: not health care, not education, not even shelter. So without the strong economy, the whole equation sort of breaks down.

The next part—this is the second step of four important principles—is fiscal responsibility. This is a traditional Conservative value. It can be simply stated as, "You cannot spend more than you earn." You can invest, certainly, in those kinds of infrastructure, both human and physical, that grow your economy and grow your society for the greater good and the sustainability of all. So the second principle is the fiscal responsibility.

The third and I think most important part is the sustainability of quality of life. That's far-ranging, from

health to environment, and probably they overlap a fair amount; safe quality food production and inspection processes. It crosses all boundaries, including safe communities. So you have everything from police to health care workers, and indeed I'd include in that an accessible education system both at the post-secondary level and the elementary level. That feeds into our quality of life. In that, I would include such things as having a diverse culture and having access to recreational resources and opportunities.

But again this all goes back to the fundamentals of who is paying the piper. Ultimately, that's where I believe you as a government found the revenue fell off the radar screen. You were collapsing as a government, and you ran up \$15-billion deficits. Actually, it's hard to say which came first. I suspect it's fiscal policy that allows you to assess decisions. I was part of that, when you had two or three different plans before the social contract to try to reach some agreement. It was the expenditure reduction plan when I was a regional councillor. I was the chair of finance, and the expenditure reduction plan was an attempt to say, "OK, everybody raise their hand and take a 15% raise." Well, nobody raised their hand, and nobody took a raise. Eventually it had to be mandated, and everyone understood.

At the very top, when you called Wilson and the OFL—Gord Wilson, a nice fellow and all that—called them all together with Earl Manners and all the rest of them there, no one would agree to say, "Wait a minute. The public sector doesn't make products. The marketplace figures it out." Whether it's cars, whether Chrysler is better than Honda, the marketplace figures it out. If there's no price and no quality, the people don't buy the car. General Motors, where I worked for 30 years, most of it in administration, found in the 1970s that they didn't have the price and they didn't have the quality, and people were buying Hondas. So the marketplace sorted it out. I would say today they've improved in both price and quality. That comes down to a fundamental part of this fiscal equation, which is the accountability side. I'll probably talk more about that later on in my remarks.

But the fourth ingredient, and this is probably something that may receive some recognition here—certainly the most important part is having the clear vision of where you want to be, a vision of where you want to be as a society, a vision of where you want families to be, a vision that recognizes efforts and rewards, a vision that recognizes accountability. That's not a negative word. Some people view accountability as each family—families that perhaps might be listening tonight realize that accountability means that you can't spend more than you earn. It's as basic as that. You can invest, but what am I getting for the investment?

1930

I go through these numbers every once in a while. I chaired four budgets when I was in education, and I saw the demand always exceeding the supply, the municipalities blaming the school boards, and there was no accountability. In fact, if you go back in history, there

were two commissions while I was in municipal office. There was the disentanglement report—David, you would remember that—and there was the Fair Tax Commission, both of which were trying to achieve the same thing: who pays for what service and who has what revenue stream? Basically that's what they were saying.

**Mr Ramsay:** You ignored the report.

**Mr O'Toole:** No. The report, quite honestly, is all part of the accountability mechanism that is in this budget. It's part of the Who Does What. It's part of the local services realignment. If you don't appreciate that switch of \$2.5 billion off the residential tax base and the uploading of \$3 billion of costs—that's what happened. We downloaded part of ambulance and part of some other service levels, but we uploaded \$3 billion in education to the provincial expenditure side—very important.

There are four points: a strong economy; fiscal responsibility and accountability; sustainability of quality of life; and strong leadership, with the determination to deliver on the vision. Those are the four principles that are absolutely critical to understand this document and the very strategic, logistical decisions that are being made to deliver.

What evidence do I have that these commitments will be delivered? The proof is in the budget. We have had the third straight year with a balanced budget. That's the first time in 100 years in this province that has actually happened. It's tough love. It's tough medicine in some respects. But if you go back to the four principles, without that discipline and that vigour to keep the economy strong and competitive, so you don't scare away investment and jobs from Microsoft to whomever, so that opportunities are there for people—and the numbers are all here to support. Some 600,000 people have left welfare and the number of net new jobs is closing in on 900,000. The numbers are there.

If you look back to the previous year or the previous decade, it's often referred to by many chronicles of history as the 10 lost years. I can tell you that the other signal of success of the fiscal policies of this government is that we've paid off \$3 billion in debt. This deserves a whole 20-minute dissertation.

**Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** How much is the debt.

**Mr O'Toole:** The debt is now \$110 billion. And the debt, by the way, doubled between your time and their time, from \$50 billion to over \$100 billion. The plan of your government, before you were elected, Mr McMeekin, in the Lyn McLeod red book, where you got defeated in 1995, showed lower repayment of debt and higher debt at the end of your term. The only ones who were honest were the New Democrats who said, and do believe, that governments spend money.

You believe in tax and spend, I understand that, and that's where we differ. You believe that every solution to every problem is to increase taxes. If you dare to stand and refute that—when you increase taxes, whether it's teachers or nurses, you're taking it out of this pocket and putting it in this pocket. It's true. The evidence is there.

The middle-class people, of whom I'm one, were working harder and getting less. There was less and less accountability and in fact many people on the front line in the public sector were extremely frustrated, to the point where they threw out the NDP and completely rejected the Liberal government.

The plan we put in place was to repatriate the budget. There was almost a \$12-billion annualized shortfall in the budget—\$12 billion out of \$60 billion. That's a 20% shortfall every year.

**Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):** So you increased the debt instead.

**Mr O'Toole:** You don't understand. I'm sorry, you don't understand why the debt did increase. The debt increased—

**Mr McMeekin:** You borrowed it.

**Mr O'Toole:** You'll get your time. You'll get your two minutes.

The debt increased because on top of that, Ontario Hydro debt was some—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I request that the member opposite not patronize us.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order. The member for Durham has the floor.

**Mr O'Toole:** I apologize to the member for Hamilton Mountain. She will get her two minutes. I do have a lot of respect, and I didn't mean it in a patronizing way. But if you look at the numbers, if you were to actually cut the deficit immediately, it would be like jamming the brakes on in a sports car. It took us about two and half years to eliminate the shortfall every year. There are only two ways: either increase taxes or reduce spending. They're the only two ways of eliminating the annualized shortfall.

When you have a deficit, Mr McMeekin, the deficit goes into the debt bucket every year, as you understand, I'm sure, perhaps, as a former mayor.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr O'Toole:** That is really what happened. If you look at the plan on top of that, we repatriated the Ontario Hydro stranded debt. Their debt load was about \$38 billion. Of the \$38 billion, a portion of that debt was recognized by the Macdonald commission as stranded debt, that is, the assets could not pay off the debt. So the restructuring of Ontario Hydro is an important debate that needs to be held. If you look at the public accounts documents and in our budget document, you will see very clearly that that has been addressed. It will be an ongoing part of the debate.

But I want to make a couple of last points. The evidence is clearly in that the fiscal approach of this government is up. I would say that real exports as a percentage of GDP have grown by 59.8%. That's an increase of 17.3%. Housing starts are up 99.7%. The consumer confidence index has grown from 97 to 122, a 25% increase. Retail sales have grown \$79 billion, up 33.7%. Auto sales are up 45.9%. Total employment is up

14.4%. Disposable income is up 22.1%. Real machinery and equipment investment in this province is up 92%. Real commercial and industrial investment has increased; it's up 36%. The Canadian consumer price index has gone from 2.9%, a 0.4% change. The private sector consensus for real GDP growth is 2.3% in 2003 and 3.6% in 2002.

I really believe fundamentally that there's far more that needs to be debated in Bill 45. I recognize the importance of education, while at the same time recognizing parent choice. It's completely unacceptable for our children and their future to be ransomed. Parents want choice. They do not want to be in conflict with their teachers. Most of them highly respect their individual teachers. Quite honestly, it's a systems problem.

I'm only making these comments out of respect. I think some of the people in the gallery tonight are potentially educators. I would leave on a note of saying I have the highest respect. Most of us here tonight owe the very fact that we're here and able to articulate our arguments to educators. In that group of people, I would include current teachers, as well as parents, who are in fact the primary educators of our children. In fact, teachers themselves cannot do it without a strong family in the background helping them to build and set goals and be role models for them as young people.

The last and most important issue in the few minutes left is the 5.4% increase in health care spending, \$1.2 billion. There's more work to be done and this government's job is not finished, but we're well on our way to making this the greatest province to live, to work and to raise a family in.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions, comments? The member for—I knew I was going to have trouble with this one. Let me see: Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot.

**Mr McMeekin:** That's right: you go west to east, Mr Speaker. Congratulations; good to see you in that chair. You look great.

I want to talk just briefly a little bit about this prosperity argument. I want to say upfront that whoever planted the idea in the honourable member's head that Liberals are opposed to tax cuts quite clearly wasn't looking at recent history. One only needs to look at our cousins at the federal level and some of the wonderfully creative things that our finance minister there, who happens to be a good Liberal, has done. No one would have remembered the Good Samaritan if he hadn't had money. Prosperity is important. We want to be prosperous. We want an economy that's strong.

The reason Liberals, and some other members on this side of the House, want an economy that's strong is so we can look over our shoulders and spot and respond to the legitimate needs of the vulnerable, not treat this political journey we're on like some wagon train that's going west that only stops to light a campfire every once in a while and to drop off the vulnerable, the sick, the aged and those other folk who have special needs.

We want a prosperous Ontario, but a prosperous Ontario includes a strong and healthy health care system, it includes a public education system that will make a difference in the young lives of the children who have the privilege of working with so many wonderful teachers across this province, and it includes an environment where anyone in this province can pick up a glass of water without fear of injury, like in this House: take a sip and then sit down.

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**Mr Marchese:** The member from Durham is right: there is more to Bill 45 than issues of education. It is for that reason that we said to him, "Separate the two." There's so much to separate from that bill. Bill 45 with the accompanying documents is this thick, more or less. It's a big document. So the member for Durham is so right to say, "Yes, we've got to talk about so many other aspects of Bill 45." So separate the issues. Give us a break. Give us time to debate them. Take them out of Bill 45 so we can have a proper debate on these issues. You're right.

But he also seems to believe it's the job of Conservative governments to take our money—your money, good citizens; your money, good taxpayers; and my money—and give it away to corporate avarice, to the avaricious among us, the corporate avariciousness that's out there. The rapacious corporations that are out there can't get enough. No matter how much this government's taxes are diminished, the corporate sector says, "It's not enough. We want more." Who's going to pay for our educational system if they decide they don't want to pay any more? It's left to you, good citizens. If that's the way we're going, we won't need or want an educational system any more, because there's not going to be anybody left to pay.

I say to you, good citizens, we have a rally this Thursday. New Democrats will be there among so many others, with so many other coalition groups, saying we need hearings. We need this rally to bring people together this Thursday at Queen's Park at 6 o'clock. I invite you to take some time out of your busy lives to come and demonstrate visibly against this government deciding to take public money for private education—for religious education and for private non-denominational education. We believe it's wrong. Come out this Thursday at 6 o'clock.

**Mr Dunlop:** It's always a pleasure to rise and make a few comments on the comments by my colleague from Durham. He brings up a lot of good points. Of course, we are the government and we believe in the policies that were laid out in the Common Sense Revolution. I think this House forgets very quickly the type of mess we inherited in June 1995. I'm sure you remember yourself, as a member of this Legislature, that this government inherited a deficit of spending that was \$1 million an hour. Do you remember that? You forgot that you were spending \$1 million an hour more than you were taking in. We laid out a plan, the Common Sense Revolution. We sold that plan to the citizens of Ontario. We cam-

paign on that particular plan for over 18 months before the election. We knew there was debt reduction to slowly eliminate the deficit. No one could possibly eliminate \$11 billion in one crack—you know that as well as I do—because if that was the case we'd be a bankrupt province to this day.

I'm very proud to be part of a government, proud to sit here with my colleague from Durham, and talk about and discuss in this debate this evening a balanced budget for the third year in a row. I'm very proud of that. You find fault with it, but we're looking out for the economy of all people in the province, not just special interest groups but for everyone in Ontario. The economy has to be strong in order to have the revenues to pay for all those things you want, like education, like health care. In all those things, spending has increased.

My time is up.

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** I'd like to get back to the part of the budget that deals with tax credits for independent schools and why we consider them vouchers. According to your own Premier, when children leave the public system to go to these independent schools, the taxpayer saves money.

**Mr Marchese:** Private schools.

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** Did I say "public"? I meant private schools. Your own Premier said the taxpayer saves money. Why is that? Because the per pupil grant leaves with that student. That board doesn't get that money. So if thousands of students leave, which they may, given what you've done to education—I was just watching Voice of the Province before I came here and one woman called in and said, "We are not rich and elite like Upper Canada and Hillfield and so forth, but we don't like the large class numbers." So this woman was actually funding her grandchildren in an independent private school, not necessarily an independent religious school, but just one with smaller class sizes. Of course, this is your formula. It unfortunately has worked, but I think it's stopping—I think the public, the "good citizens," as Mr Marchese says, are actually beginning to see what you're up to. The formula is, erode confidence in any public system and you can rationalize privatizing.

Now, the biggest fear of all besides education is health care, and it seems that's what you're doing with health care. Yes, we have problems in health care, but study after study has shown that privatizing doesn't make it more efficient. If it doesn't make it more efficient and if it makes it less accessible, why are you even entertaining the thought? We have a federal committee looking at it. You can't even wait for that committee, with Mr Romanow, to do its work. You have to get in there and privatize health care. As far as its being accessible to all, we do know what happens when it is private: it is accessible to those who have both the human and financial resources to access it and to know where to look for better health care.

We are against this budget for the reasons stated, and I'm very happy to be part of a caucus that looks at public education for all.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member from Durham for a two-minute response.

**Mr O'Toole:** I'd like to thank the members from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot as well as Trinity-Spadina, Simcoe North and Hamilton Mountain.

I will say briefly, in the couple of minutes left—the member from Ancaster-Dundas has said he's concerned about vulnerable people. We'll be providing \$55 million in the year 2001-02, going to \$197 million annually, to enhance services and support for people with developmental disabilities. We will also invest \$67 million over five years to build new places for them to live within communities. The Ontario Association for Community Living is absolutely thrilled. I'm also thrilled that we will be providing \$26 million over the next four years to improve the safety and security of abused women and children in crisis by adding 300 beds in women's shelters and refurbishing another 100; we'll also provide \$3 million this year, growing to \$9 million, for counselling and crisis intervention. In my riding, that equates to Bethesda House, a women's shelter I've supported, even when I was on council, in many ways. To this day it's a great celebration.

We also recognize children's treatment centres. There are 20 in Ontario. We have an excellent one that has been arguing for years—Grandview Children's Centre—for children with very high special needs; also \$26 million to improve community mental health, and the list goes on.

In the very few minutes, I just want to respect that I did listen to other people. The member from Trinity-Spadina spoke about education and the hearings. The minister did commit—whether it's under some pressure—that there will be hearings and it is appropriate. But the debate has been going on—if you want the records, I have many of them—since around 1980, all documented. In fact, it was part of our pre-document on visioning education, called New Directions, Volume Two, by Elizabeth Witmer and Dianne Cunningham in 1993. Read it.

Also, in respect to our taxing, we have actually reduced by 73,000 the families who will pay taxes. They still pay tax federally.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Further debate?

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**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** It is my pleasure to stand in this important debate. This is a very limited debate that this government has been willing to concede in its rather roundabout, indirect, couching and hiding way of putting forward this proposal for education. It's stuck on pages 24 and 25 of the bill to enable the budget. It was a couple of paragraphs in the budget speech, and yet it has profound implications. Kicking and screaming, finally the government has been drawn into a very small concession to the people of this province, that they might actually get enough time to understand what this government is up to.

There's an instruction from a government that not too long ago put forward a proposal for a voucher: \$3,500 to

encourage people to go to private schools. That government was in Michigan and that government was defeated in its referendum at the polls. In Michigan, 70% of the population said, "Private school vouchers are no good for our kids."

This government, by contrast, doesn't even have the courage of its convictions, can't stand up and say to the people of Ontario, "This is what we want to do and we stand behind it." To the contrary, this is the government that a year and some months ago had, in the words of the Premier, no intention of changing a commitment to public education. We can only infer in this House and in this province that this, then, is that change. This is the government now deciding it is no longer committed to public education.

For parents who have tried in the last six years to make sense of their children's school, who have tried to get response, for teachers and for other people who've worked hard to try to provide education under the duress provided by this government and its centralizing, over-controlling, defunding environment, now finally everything they've experienced makes sense. It makes sense that the government has been in the midst of building toward this particular proposal.

This is an attack on public education. In other places—in fact, in 35 US states they all at least recognize that. But we don't have a government here with those kinds of convictions. We don't have a government with that kind of pride in what it stands for. Instead, it tries to slip it in the back door, and worse, it tries to hide behind other things than what it really intends. But make no mistake, this is a \$3,500-see-you-later pass to families to take their kids out of public education, to take some public funds with them and into private schools. That's what this government has put in front of us in Bill 45.

It is harmful to all publicly funded schools. Every student who leaves is taking \$6,800, which, by the way, is about \$1,000 less than schools and students were funded in 1995, but it's still \$6,800, and Mike Harris is going to give that \$3,500 to the parents. After the first \$300 million that they take away, that they aren't making available to public education this year, then perversely, strangely, and in a way that none of the members across have addressed, the government will actually hang on to those dollars, will actually make that a dividend of backing away from public education.

There are parents out there feeling pretty harried, there are students focused on exams and there are teachers doing their marking. It is important that people out there do take the time to have a look at this. We have so very little time, thanks to this government's particular inability to face the public, to face their public.

In fact, it has to be that the priority for funds is in public education. But more than that, what this province needs to give excellence for all in education is a government that will give education the priority, and that's what our party is prepared to do. Our party has already put forward proposals that this government in power has available to them as options they could use to improve

education. But sadly they choose not to, and that's part of our debate here tonight. It's the part about, do we want to have, for example, lower class sizes for kids in the primary grades? This government raised those class sizes. This government cut back on commitments to junior kindergarten, to the smallest grades, where we've learned—and everyone in this House has been exposed to—we can make a substantial difference from what we were aware of even 10 and 15 years ago. If we spend the right kind of time with children at an early age, we can actually have those kinds of investments pay for themselves. But this government declines to do it.

Elsewhere in Bill 45 they'll commit \$2.2 billion to lowering large corporate taxes 25% below those of our neighbouring US states. This government is leading a race to the bottom. They don't want to compete on quality education, on excellent health care. That's not the wont of this government. It's never been more apparent than in that contrast in Bill 45. Two desultory pages to create a back door out of education and then many, many more pages to say to corporations, "You will be getting the extra reward. You will have a bonus from this government at the cost of those students."

We have said that's wrong. We have said the priority should be lower class sizes. We've said how much it would cost and we said that has to take priority, but we cannot yet convince the members opposite. That's why tonight we are appealing to the public of Ontario. We are saying to them that the future of education is in their hands, to be talking to the people in their communities and to be insisting that if there is \$300 million available right now, it needs to be spent on public education. We are going to help them. We are going to help them by making them aware. We are going to help them by helping make their members aware. Each government member has to reckon with, as the member for Peterborough has to, things like these textbooks.

This textbook, if I can just quickly reference it, was written in 1964 and revised in 1982. This is a textbook I got last week from Gary Fenn, the head of history at Thomas A Stewart school in the city of Peterborough. It's called *The Enduring Past*. This government would like to leave students of history, of almost all the subjects in grade 11, stuck in the past with textbooks that are falling apart, that aren't even available in numbers for students to take home and study. This government is endorsing that, because this year, the same year they want to give private school vouchers, is the year they cut in half the amount of money available for textbooks, so there'll be no new textbooks for history in grade 11. The only funding available from this government—after imposing the new curriculum, after making that happen all across the province, not testing it ahead of time and saying to all teachers, "This is what you will teach," they're saying to them, "You can't have the textbooks. We're not prepared to pay the freight. We won't make those schools work. Instead, you'll just have to get by."

If that's the choice, I think the parents and the taxpayers of this province who carry the freight for pub-

lic education are going to want to talk back to their members, and we're inviting them to do that. We want them to take part in forums that are going to be in their communities. We want them to take part in the public hearings that this government has offered a very, very small window for. They'd like them to happen like that and disappear, and the summer occur and this insidious measure be in place. We're not going to let that happen, and we say to people tonight who are watching, call the clerk of the finance committee, Susan Sourial—she's available on the Web site—and register your willingness to be heard. This is your place. It hasn't looked like it for quite a long time, but this is where decision after decision on public education has been made without accountability from this government opposite. Now is the time, because they've made their choice.

This government has said that they are prepared not only to invest money but their commitment over in the private sector. Let's be very clear that this does cut off a better future. There are things that students need: they need the textbooks; they need the smaller class sizes. We can't do a good job with any kind of curriculum unless we let the teachers have a fighting chance of being able to impart not just the knowledge but the support and the individualized attention. For some reason, the members opposite don't want to provide that. For some reason, they want to cut off those kids from their future.

We think there should be in schools, funded by the government, an ability to share excellence, a priority for excellence that would allow, for example, lighthouse programs to take the best things that are happening in the system that we have in public education and make them available to other schools and to have that happen with the express encouragement of the provincial government, because right now that intangible simply isn't there. This measure strikes to the heart of whether or not the public service, the kind of motivation that makes our schools and the other worthwhile things in our society work, is at all appreciated, let alone rewarded, by the government of the day that has that leadership responsibility.

This policy is fundamentally a lazy policy. It appeals to people to say, "Take your self-interest and we'll let you walk out the door with \$3,500." It says to the members of this House, "You don't have to wrestle or struggle with the consequences of your decisions; you'll never have a motivation again to fix public education, because we're prepared to defund it, family by family, out the back door," rather than do what I sincerely believe the people of Ontario expect them to do, that they don't have an exemption from. They are supposed to do the job of leading education, and what the people of this province need is a government that will take responsibility.

Over the years, I think people have been very familiar with a whining refrain that comes from the government benches, that blames everybody else. It blames students, it blames school boards and it blames teachers. I can tell you that a Liberal government would stop that, would take responsibility for providing excellence in education,

and that's exactly what this government is afraid to do. They've declined to do that.

I think there's another quality in what the government is offering to us in Bill 45 that needs to be understood by the people of Ontario, and it has that quality of—not deceit, because I know that's not a word we can use in this House, but it has fundamentally a quality of misdirection, of saying to the people out there, "This is what it's about," when in reality it's about something completely different.

The government is pretending that this is an issue of fairness, but when you look at what they're offering, what they're actually saying to families out there is, "If you happen to be in the families we're using for our marketing, who are tied to the railway tracks, religious families who are out there who didn't have a deduction, you might gain \$600 out of the \$3,500. But if you're in a private secular school, then for the first time you're getting a brand new tax break." The members opposite have a responsibility to go to their ridings and come clean about that.

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They are not giving this as a benefit to families who may be out of the public school system for matters of conscience; this is simply a reward to existing private elite schools, existing private secular schools and the ones that this government obviously hopes will occur in future. It's a wide-open exemption. It doesn't exist in any state or any province anywhere. This is brand new. This is an ideological turn for this government. It obviously reflects where they think they're headed.

I'm here to tell you this is not a direction for the government. This is a dead end. This government is going to get nowhere with this particular direction because I am certain they are going to run into the awareness that's starting to build out there, the aliveness that people have, that public education isn't just worth defending—it's worth fighting for.

Public education touches our fundamental values in being able to create places where people can go and reach their potential. They can reach it on some kind of approximate basis. We don't define people by where they come from; we define them by where they're going. If they've got the energy and the ability, they're going to go as far as possible.

We need to do better in our schools certainly, because education has become the one thing we can confer on people, but this is not the way, not this desultory, lazy lack of initiative coming from this government that would then say to families in this province, "Take your kids out." I think people know. They can read between the lines what that means, that this government is not going to be committed. That makes it even more important that right now the people of the province respond, that right now the people of the province don't just see this as an initiative coming down the track, but that they stop it cold in its tracks, because this government is simply using political opportunism. They see a narrowcast for some votes. They see this as some way to offer

an ideology to the small number of people out there who want it and, very perversely, this is a way to get at some of the very people who have become discouraged about public education in the last five and six years, courtesy of this government, a government that I think the province of Ontario needs reminding spent public dollars on advertising to attack the teaching profession, to attack school boards, to attack people within education ... help create some of this very lack of confidence.

But I have a very good sense that people out there know much better. They want to see a school operate with the full support of the community. They want to have the control of schools decentralized. We have had a Soviet-style government in the last six years that people are just now starting to understand, a government whose sole-minded emphasis has been to cut services to fund the tax cut that no economist can be found to support as an engine for the economy, but members across swear illogically on its merits, and only that. This is an obsessed government that doesn't have the ability to build in the balance that some of the most vulnerable people in our society, the ones we have a charge for—

**Mr Spina:** You're so full of it. Get out a pitchfork and a wheelbarrow.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Order. The member for Brampton Centre will withdraw.

**Mr Spina:** I withdraw.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr Kennedy:** We see some upset happening as members opposite too are starting to realize this sad policy is something they're stuck with, that they don't dare—last week I wrote to them. I wrote to all the members of the House and I said very openly, "Go back to your schools. Have the confidence of your convictions. Go and explain to the public schools how you condone lousy textbooks for kids and private vouchers instead. Tell those people." Everyone in this House has that obligation. Go and see your public school. You have the answers; let's hear them.

Mr Speaker, I wish I could report to you after constituency week that dozens of the members opposite took advantage of that, that they were to be found in their public schools accounting for this policy. That's not happening.

I think there's still time for the members opposite, there's still time for this House to be able to restore some confidence and faith in the ability of legislators to make a difference. The members opposite don't like to be labelled with political opportunism, but that's where it stands. There is no explanation. There is no place in the world that private school vouchers are seen as a way to help public education. There's nothing that can be said about that. We will hear hopefully from the members opposite, that they won't ramble on about the other parts about Bill 45 but they'll actually address this question. If you're confident, let's hear it. Let's hear the defence. Explain to people why it is religious schools get one fifth the benefit of private, elite schools. Explain that. Put it on

the record. Table the facts. Let's see where you're coming from.

Your communities deserve to hear from you because, fundamentally, in 35 US states there were misguided governments and misguided initiatives, but they at least at the very minimum had the capacity to put this in front of the people. We can't even get this government to hold hearings in their own communities. Why won't we have hearings in Brampton and Barrie and Markham? Why won't we? Why won't we go out and see what's happening in Muskoka and hear from people who want to be heard from? What possibly could elected members of this House be afraid to hear? How could they be worried?

This measure, for all its demerits, has one grace, which is that it doesn't actually take place until next fiscal year. There is no reason for anything but a government that is short on backbone and long on arrogance to play it this way. There is plenty of time for this government to change its mind. There are two pages, a proposal that's put forward.

Every member in this House deserves to account for it, because this government did not run on this issue. This government did not say to the people of this province, "This is what we will do if we're in government." Instead, they said the opposite. They tried to play and they tried to infer that they would never do anything of the kind. We have a letter from the Premier which says explicitly that "such an action"—and make no mistake, private school vouchers are such an action—"would run directly counter to Ontario's long-standing commitment to public education." That was apparently the truth on the Premier's letterhead on January 18, 2000, far after the election. That was the truth then. Where is the truth today from the people opposite?

In this House they have a Minister of Education who voted today. We should register, because not everybody may have been watching between 3:30 and 6, that there was an opportunity for members of this House to vote their conscience for public education. They had a chance to expressly say that lower class sizes would be more important to them than this private school voucher, but there was no member of the government who thought that way. There were none of them who could put themselves on the record with that kind of preference for students.

Students out there I think look to this House more than we realize. There are students out there who realize that they constitute, in their prevoting age, a pretty vulnerable minority, and they recognize, I think, pretty instinctively whether or not the adults are getting their act together on their behalf. If the members take their time, if they go into their own schools, if they're not afraid to go in those schools, they will find students who have been already attuned to what's happening. They recognize how much different the experience is than that of their brothers and sisters. They recognize that this was the government where not one member opposite got up and said, "We've got to put extracurricular activities back in the schools. We've got to put students first." Not one member oppos-

ite said that for 240 days. Then finally, latterly, after the fact, the Minister of Education in desultory fashion said, "We might fix this problem we've inflicted on students."

I know the students out there fervently hope they'll be here at a vigil tomorrow night. They fervently hope to see sincerity emanating from the government benches, from every member in this House, and we will be judged by our actions in the next number of days. I think the people of this province, the students of this province, in the last six years know there has not been a fulsome commitment to education, that we have in front of us a bill, tawdry as it is, in sections 40 and 41 of Bill 45, that acts as a litmus test. This government is fond of giving everybody else tests. They say they'll test teachers, they say they'll test students, they say they'll test trustees, and they'll inflict horrible penalties if they aren't responded to. This Bill 45—some people say, "Bill 45, the smoking gun"—is a test for the government, and we have a pretty good idea that they just won't be up to it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments. The member for Trinity-Spadina.

**Mr Marchese:** I've got a minute for the critic for education for the Liberal Party and another minute for the government. Here it is. I agree with most of what the member for Parkdale-High Park says. I do. I've got some questions for him. I read the 10-point plan of the Liberal Party. I haven't had a chance to be critical of it yet because I'm so busy attacking you guys, but here it is.

2010

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** No, that's another one.

Point 9 of their 10-point plan says, "Every new teacher will be required to meet a rigorous entrance standard"—how is that different from the Tories?—"and existing teachers will be expected to constantly upgrade their testing skills." They already do that. How is that different from what the Tories have already presented? Good God.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Marchese:** I know you guys want to shut me down, but it won't work.

Point 10 says, "We're going to do something no Ontario government has ever done before: we will set targets for improving our province's test results," meaning they support the test results but somehow they're going to do it differently? Then they say, "We won't blame our schools or teachers or boards." That's interesting.

Point 4 says, "We will create turnaround teams. These teams will be sent into schools that consistently fail. Where necessary, we will replace the administration." So we won't blame them. We will replace them, however. We will send these replacement teams out where there's poverty and a great deal of drug abuse and all that. If they fail, we'll send teams to fix that up. Please, you guys, we don't have time for your plan, but we'll get to it.

There's a rally this Thursday at Queen's Park. And yes, Mr Kennedy, there's a vigil as well, at 6 o'clock. We support both of them. Please come to the rally and tell them that you disagree with the Premier, who says he

wants simply to have input on the implementation of this budget. We want more than that.

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** I'd like to make some comments on the speech of the member for Parkdale-High Park. In the middle of his 20-minute talk he mentioned lower class sizes, and he very quickly said they know how much it will cost or that they costed it out. That's wonderful, except they costed it out at about a third of the real cost to do the 20-person cap for junior kindergarten through grade 3. Something like \$300 million to \$400 million is the cost they may have, and of course if they'd really done their homework they'd know it's over a billion dollars.

A hard cap of 20 people makes no sense at all. You must know that. I mean, you have a class of 21 people so you're going to have two classes, one of 10 and one of 11. You have to have some flexibility in the system if you want it to make any sense at all. You really wouldn't want to do that if elected. It would be far too expensive and it just doesn't make sense. But if you are elected next time, I'm sure you'll figure that out.

Talking about the equality in education tax credit, you keep saying we're funding schools. We aren't funding schools. We're letting the hard-working people of this province keep some of their hard-earned money to use as they choose in an independent school. That is very much different from funding schools. It starts out as a 10% tax credit in the first year.

He talked about tax cuts, saying no economist would support the idea of tax cuts. Well, I think they've proven themselves with the \$15 billion in extra revenue this province has garnered since 1995. I don't really think we need an economist; economists usually differ in their opinions of various items anyway. I think that's proven fact at this point.

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** I'm very happy to comment on the remarks made by my colleague from Parkdale-High Park. I do not know an individual more committed to public education in this province. He put forward in the debate this evening some very salient points, put them on the floor for serious consideration.

These are issues that have come to my colleague the critic and to me in my role as a rural member, and we believe that the people of Ontario and the issues they've brought to our attention deserve your attention. I believe the people of Ontario, as my colleague has indicated, deserve an opportunity to have their voice heard.

My leader, Dalton McGuinty, has indicated that we want public hearings across the province so that all people in Ontario will have an opportunity to share their comments, to share their ideas on this notion.

This is a total about-face for Mike Harris and the Tories of Ontario. We have it in writing as recently as January 2000. This was not the government's position. In the debate in the last provincial election, Mike Harris declared he would not put public dollars toward private schools.

**Interjection:** He didn't.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** He did, and he's turned around on that. We believe the people of Ontario should have an opportunity to make their voices heard on this very significant policy issue.

I want to make a comment as well to the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, who was a little critical of our math. I suggest that maybe his own math needs some review. The Minister of Finance has indicated that this idea could cost some \$300 million, and I think now it's recognized rather broadly across the province—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The member for Hamilton West.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I also want to underscore many of the comments of the member from Parkdale-High Park.

The government has spent a fair bit of time this evening and on other days trying to convince everybody that it's not a voucher system, that a tax credit is entirely different because one goes to the family and the other goes directly to the building. The fact of the matter is, what you're going to do is encourage more people, more students to leave the public system and go into the private system, for a number of reasons, not the least of which we can trace back to former Education Minister Snobelen saying you were going to create a crisis.

So the less confidence there is in the public system, by virtue of your underfunding, the more average parents are going to have discussions around the kitchen table saying, "What are we going to do? We're not satisfied with what's happening in the education system." They are not going to sit there and debate the policy of how funding in the public education system happens in this province. They're going to focus on the quality of education our children are receiving. If that's not coming up to what those parents expect, then they're going to have that discussion around the table.

The fact that you've put a tax credit on the table means that option looks more appealing. So it means more private spots, more private schools and less money in public education, because as far as I understand this bill, for every student who leaves the public sector and goes into the private, the school board gets deducted that money. Same overhead, but it's on a per pupil basis, and if the pupils start leaving, you're going to have less money. But the same overhead: you still have to heat the same building, you still have to bring a teacher in.

You can play all the games you want. This is about devastating our public education system.

**The Deputy Speaker: Response?**

**Mr Kennedy:** It's a pleasure to respond. The member for Trinity-Spadina said he was going to spend a minute on us; he spent a minute and 45. I think he's losing his perspective, unfortunately. This isn't just about what you're against; this has to be about what you're for.

We're for excellence for all in education. What needs to be put in front of the people of this province is an alternative to the lazy, spent attitude of this particular government. We're in fact not only prepared to take responsibility but to actually put forward proposals, to

make sure that—somebody tried to ridicule turnaround teams. If you're in an area that has extra challenges, you should get extra help. We're saying that right now.

We're saying—for example, the schools that exist in Simcoe that have 400 from another system: what's happening in the school that's lost 400, and why doesn't the provincial education system take care of that? It doesn't take care of that. Out there are textbooks that are unusable or don't exist in adequate numbers. I want to say to parents watching and to schoolchildren and teachers: send your member, when you are done, the school books you have in your riding. Show them where the money, the \$300 million they want to invest launching this private voucher initiative, should be going. Tell people what we need to make our schools excellent.

It's not because we don't have some of the best teachers in the world; we do. We've got students who have competed successfully internationally. I want to mention in particular Durham region, where they won a world-class award not many years ago. The combination of the Minister of Finance, who has taken over education with this particular initiative, and the Minister of Education representing that area have taken away from that school the motivation, the willingness to get things done on the part of students and on the part of teachers and have shown us how you can run things into the ground just by not being committed to them.

I can tell the parents, the students, the teachers, the public out there who invest—75% of whom don't have kids—that this party is committed to making sure we have the best public education system in the world, and we won't let this government get away with putting up a back door to wreck it.

2020

#### **The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Dunlop:** It's a pleasure to rise this evening to speak on Bill 45, the Ontario budget, 2001. I know most of the evening has been taken up with tax credits and that issue, but I'd like to talk about the budget itself and the seven themes that underlie the budget: responsible choices, cutting your taxes, building growth, value for money, helping our most vulnerable, investing in our young people and a plan for the future.

I'd like to thank Minister Flaherty for bringing down his first budget. I think he's done an excellent job on it. I'd like to thank the previous speakers this evening for their comments.

The 2001 Ontario budget is balanced for the third year in a row, and that's very important to me as a new member. It's the first time in nearly 100 years that an Ontario government has presented three consecutive balanced budgets.

Earlier this evening I was talking to the member from Thornhill, Ms Molinari. It's very interesting that for a newcomer in 1999, she is probably the first lady in the history of this province to sit on a government that's balanced the budget in her first three years as a member of that government. I think she should be very proud of that, and I drew that to her attention earlier. It's seldom

that something like that would happen, but I think it's important. I'm very proud of the fact that in my first three years here as a member of the second-term Mike Harris government, we've balanced the budget for three years in a row.

I'd like to talk about responsible choices. This budget contains the largest debt repayment of any government in the history of the province, \$3 billion. The government has achieved, to this point, 80% of the \$5-billion net debt reduction commitment we promised the people of Ontario in our Blueprint commitment in the election of 1999.

From 1996 to 1999, Ontario kept its promise to cut personal income taxes by 30%. In 1999, our government, in the Blueprint, as I said earlier, made a new promise: Ontario taxpayers would get an additional 20%—a \$4-billion tax reduction over five years. The steps to this goal were taken in the 1999 and 2000 budgets. The budget we are debating tonight proposes that over the next two years, the first and second tax rates would drop to 5.65% and 8.85% respectively. On January 1, 2003, the threshold at which surtax is payable would rise. This effectively removes the first tier of the two-tier surtax.

The results of that are that 95% of taxpayers in Ontario would see tax savings of 20% or more, and the average tax saving for taxpayers with incomes of up to \$100,000 would exceed 20%. The largest percentage reductions would be concentrated on taxpayers with lower and middle incomes. More than \$4 billion of additional tax savings would be delivered to Ontario taxpayers. Once again, our promise has been kept.

The cornerstone of our plan and tax cuts—I want to make this point very clear: each taxpayer has benefited from tax cuts. Some 660,000 low-income earners have been completely removed from Ontario's tax rolls since 1995. In this latest budget, I'm proud to say we're proposing to remove another 75,000 people from the Ontario tax rolls.

It's interesting, when we talk about tax cuts, how many provinces and even the federal government have followed the lead of Ontario and of course our colleagues in Alberta. It's interesting to note that for a family with an income of \$60,000, without the tax cuts they today would have been paying \$4,570 in provincial taxes and \$8,110 in federal. After these tax cuts, the provincial roll will drop 51%, so the family that was paying \$4,500 will now pay \$2,200. And even the federal government—we were pleased last year, as a caucus, to see that the federal government had decided to finally reduce some taxes. That family of \$60,000 will go from \$8,100 to \$6,400 after the federal tax cuts are in place. Ontario leads almost all the other provinces and the federal government in looking at tax cuts.

A few years ago, almost anyone in this House would have thought tax cuts would be an impossible way of stimulating the economy and of creating jobs and creating the type of wealth we have in our province today. After two years of record growth, Ontario's economy continues to grow. The private sector consensus for the

real GDP growth is 2.3% this year and 3.6% planned for 2002. Our job growth, and this is also included in the budget, will continue in 2001 and accelerate in 2002. Ontario's economy has created record new jobs: 22,900 since the 2001 throne speech. We're very pleased with those types of announcements and results of our fiscal management.

During the budget, Minister Flaherty announced Ontario's Edge. Its purpose is to legislate the full schedule for corporate income taxes between now and 2005 to give our businesses certainty to plan for the future. You all realize that we feel very strongly about investing in our businesses so they can continue to invest in the economy and create the types of jobs we want for Ontario families.

We begin to eliminate the job-killing capital tax by proposing a \$5-million capital tax deduction. We will review tax incentives to make sure they are effective.

We're building on the quality of life in Ontario through clean air, good roads, efficient transportation and quality hospitals.

Ontario's Edge will also legislate the corporate income tax cut that would provide businesses with certainty so they can plan for expansion in the hiring of new staff. Again, I believe Ontario today is at 5.7%, the lowest unemployment rate in our country.

The budget proposes to adopt several recommendations of the Business Tax Review Panel. The proposed capital tax deduction would, first of all, increase capital available for reinvestment. It would simplify our tax system. It would remove capital tax liability for over 11,000 small and medium-sized businesses. The business tax review panel noted that the tax incentives add complexity to our system. The province will review business's tax incentives to ensure their effectiveness, as well as such targeted taxes as the corporate minimum tax and the tax for fuel conservation.

Ontario's Edge also has capital investments through SuperBuild, and that will help enhance the quality of life. The SuperBuild millennium fund is planned to support this goal, with \$250 million for interregional transit in the GTA and nearby regions and \$250 million for strategic infrastructure projects to support Smart Growth in other urban areas, and finally, \$500 million that was previously committed to Toronto's waterfront. Again, I think we're all planning and would like to see the province of Ontario and the city of Toronto be successful in the 2008 summer Olympics.

### 2030

We will invest \$25 million more this year to ensure that our water is safe and our air is clean. That has increased operating funding to the Ministry of the Environment by 51% since 1997-98.

Quality of life depends on value for money and also on balance and priorities. The 2001-02 budget increases health care spending by 5.4% or \$1.2 billion. Having increased investment in health care by almost \$6 billion since taking office is something we're very proud of. We've already far exceeded the commitment we made in

our Blueprint in 1999. I'm very pleased with that, although we know the current rate of increase in health care spending is not sustainable. I look back to 1995-96, when health care spending made up 38% of the provincial budget. Today we're at 45%, and it's growing at a rapid rate.

We need to address health care challenges on two fronts. First of all, it would be nice to reform federal funding to ensure that Ottawa funds at least 50% of the increases. Currently their commitment is only 14 cents on the dollar. We need to have Ottawa back in the health care business; it's as simple as that. Also, we have to reform the health care system to make it work better and to ensure its sustainability. I know we talk over and over about federal involvement in health care, but 14 cents on the dollar is actually ridiculous when you think that the original agreement was for 50 cents on the dollar.

The first step in reform is greater accountability for health care and other sectors. We've talked over and over in the throne speech and in the budget—

### Interjections.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The Minister of Labour is not in his seat. If he insists on heckling, he will have to leave this place.

The member for Simcoe North.

**Mr Dunlop:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I needed that break anyway. I'm really dry.

The first step in reform is greater accountability for health care and other sectors. We will introduce the Public Sector Accountability Act to apply to all transfer recipient organizations. That act will require those organizations to publish business plans and performance measures, will require them to have balanced budgets and will require these organizations to showcase achievements of the most efficient organizations. I've talked to people on some of the hospital boards, and there are some concerns about this Public Sector Accountability Act. But people who are efficient are looking to be rewarded for efficiencies, and I think that's a good method as well.

The accountability office will be set up in the Ministry of Finance. That office will evaluate performance across whatever sector we're referring to. It will champion the strongest performers and spread best practices, and will promote the creation of common goals and performance measures. It will also monitor compliance with the new act and will implement remedies where performance must be improved. I look forward to further debate on that act when we introduce it as well.

We will also undertake value-for-money reviews of all government spending. Again, that's part of the accountability and responsibility we brought out in the throne speech. We will invoke private sector expertise—you know that we believe very strongly in the private sector. We will ask common sense questions about what services government should be providing, and we'll ask whether services are still meeting their goals, whether these individual ministries or agencies are performing their goals effectively. We will look for other delivery options

to make the maximum investment for our taxpayers, and we want to look for every possible efficiency that can be out there. We will generate savings for the highest priorities.

We will be seeking a buyer for the Province of Ontario Savings Office, and we will be looking for other ways to involve the private sector to find cost-effective solutions in providing services to our taxpayers. We will look to maximizing benefits and services to all the taxpayers of Ontario.

One of the policies of our 2001 budget is helping the most vulnerable. Government has a role in helping the most vulnerable in our society. It's the right thing to do. We've increased funding for services and shelters for adults with developmental disabilities, 300 new and 100 refurbished beds in women's shelters, an additional \$20 million a year for children's treatment centres, and we'll be expanding education supports in child and youth centres in institutions.

We're investing \$26 million over three years for community mental health organizations. Just recently, Minister Johns was in Barrie to name the new members of the mental health task force for the Penetanguishene catchment area at the mental health centre there. I know that task force is looking forward to providing some expertise and recommendations to the Minister of Health.

The children's aid societies will receive an additional \$8 million annually. We will spend \$50 million more annually to combat youth prostitution and punish those who exploit our young people.

Included in the budget as well is \$6 million annually for police and crown attorneys to fight organized crime. We will also spend more on electronic surveillance for adult services in communities. We will be extending Project Turnaround, which is the youth correctional centre that happens to be in my riding. We will continue that for another two years. We will double the number of youth justice committees to 36.

Finally, we will be increasing early years funding by \$114 million in 2001-02, growing it to \$193 million annually. The key new initiatives will be the networks of the early years centres.

Investing in our young people has some other points I'd like to bring out as well. First of all, the support for funding of public education will increase by \$360 million in 2001 and 2002. Of course, that \$360 million has been the topic of debate here this evening. We're investing more in education than there currently is in enrolment. I think the total for this year will be \$13.86 billion for the 72 boards the province funds.

The government remains committed to guaranteed funding for the public education system—again, that's what the debate is about this evening. We have always put students and parents first. Now is the time to address the concerns of parents whose children attend independent schools, often for religious or cultural reasons. We think this is the right thing to do at this time.

Equity in education: the refundable tax credit provides relief against the first \$7,000 of tuition for each child.

The tax credit will be worth 10% of that amount in 2002, rising to 50% by 2006, which is a maximum of \$3,500. It will stay at that level for subsequent years. It's about fairness, equity and a parent's fundamental right to have input to the child's education.

We expect to have a space for every student, and we hope to provide major multi-year funding to colleges and universities for 2003-04 with the arrival of the double cohort in that year. Through the SuperBuild fund, we'll be investing \$1.8 billion to create 73,000 new student places. Of course, that was previously announced by Minister Cunningham late last fall.

I was very pleased to see that Georgian College, in my riding, received \$27 million, and construction should start right away. Also, when we refer to investing in our youth, we're investing \$60 million in the start-up of the Ontario Institute of Technology in the Durham region. That will provide a mix of university and college programs. We're pleased to see that. I myself think it's overdue, and I'm looking forward to the proposals that come forth with that.

We'll be providing another \$50 million over five years to update equipment and facilities for apprenticeship programs. Again, I think this is very positive. We'll invest \$33 million by 2004-05 to double the number of entrants into apprenticeship programs in the skilled trades. Of course, in order to build all the hospitals and colleges and all the construction that takes place with a vibrant economy, we need a good skilled workforce.

We'll also be providing \$12 million to help foreign-trained professionals enter our Ontario workforce faster.

#### 2040

My time is almost done. I just wanted to say that the goal for the future is to establish in Ontario the best-performing economy and the highest quality of life in North America. I think we've made the right decision with this budget and I'm pleased to support it here this evening.

#### The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** When you say "best quality of life," for whom? Whom are you talking about? There are people here who have been suffering since 1995, since your government got in. When I first came here in September 1999, 22 disabled children in Hamilton were at home because there wasn't enough money for educational assistants to take care of them, their toileting needs, their wheelchairs and so forth, because of the lack of funding from this government. Finally they did find half a million dollars for these educational assistants. They absorbed the costs, but they knew they'd have to pay the piper at some point, and of course we know about the teachers' strike. My kids were out, along with 40,000 other kids, for three and a half weeks. It did go to arbitration and they finally did reach a settlement, but at a sacrifice. Teachers were laid off. So is the education system better off today than it was in 1995? Certainly not in Hamilton. Certainly not in my riding; certainly not in the new city of Hamilton.

You mentioned the money for post-secondary in this budget. You had your own task force look into efficiencies, and they found that you need at least \$900 million in deferred maintenance costs. This is your own task force. This isn't our task force; this isn't an independent task force; this is your task force—\$900 million for deferred maintenance for colleges and universities, and you've pledged \$100 million in this budget. You do the math. Is that enough to take care of the buildings for our college and university students? With respect to the double cohort, you finally did give multi-year funding. I wish you'd do that with the hospitals. You finally did that with the universities. But again, you'll have to double that in the year 2003-04 to meet what your own task force says is needed for the double cohort. Are you going to do that? Are you going to double it for 2003-04?

*Interjection.*

**Mrs Bountrogianni:** Since the Minister of Labour piped up, let me remind you about accountability. You say you wanted more accountability. You have two chances now to end golden handshakes of irresponsible CEOs of hospitals, boards and so forth and you haven't taken us up on that challenge. I'm telling you, steal the next severance bill. Take it, make them accountable, take the credit and we'll applaud you for it. But don't speak out of both sides of your mouth. If you want public accountability, show us.

**Mr Christopherson:** I thought it interesting that the member for Simcoe North raised the privatization issue that's contained in here. Of course, most of the attention is focusing on the privatization of our public health—our public education system—and our health care system—but within this bill also the government has announced that they're planning to privatize the Province of Ontario Savings Office; POSO, as it's known. What's interesting is that when we asked the government officials, "What is the value that you're going to place on this to put it on the market?" they didn't know. They hadn't done the homework. So what does that tell us? It tells us that ideology is driving this. Not dollars and cents, not fiscal management, not any sense of getting a better bang for the taxpayer buck; it's all about, "We've got to privatize something or our supporters are going to be all upset, so we'll privatize POSO." That looks to be the way it is. It would be interesting to hear the government member indicate something different. If you've got a figure that it's worth, I'd like to hear it, because it means something has changed from the last time we raised this.

It's interesting, almost laughable if it weren't so serious, that the member also raised the issue of caring about the most vulnerable. There are so many things this government could do that you're not doing. You could stop clawing back the national child benefit supplement from welfare kids. Let's just isolate that one issue. There are dollars that come from the federal government to help low-income families that directly help, at least a little bit, poor children, and you claw it back. So the federal government gives it down to these individuals and you take it back. I'd like the member from Simcoe North to

tell me how poor children in Ontario benefit from that clawback.

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** I'm pleased to be able to comment on the debate the member from Simcoe North entered this evening. He started off by talking about the fact that this is the first time in 100 years that we have had three balanced budgets. He went on to say that as a new member in this House, in this Legislature, "I take great pride in being part of three years of a balanced budget." The member for Simcoe North, as a matter of fact, is one of the six men who in 100 years have balanced the budget for three years. Certainly that is something to be proud of.

In my background, coming from the York Catholic board, we had a deficit budget, and by the time I left the chairmanship there it was a balanced budget. I'm used to balanced budgets in the last number of years, so I'm pleased to be with a government that is fiscally responsible and respects taxpayers' dollars.

The member also touched on a number of important points in this budget: the fact that we've invested more money in health care. Health care is a priority. Ontarians have told us that it's their priority. We've invested more money into health care despite the fact that the federal government has reduced its funding. As a matter of fact, 100% of the increased dollars needed for health care is totally funded by the provincial government. It's totally funded by us.

We've invested more money in education, in Super-Build. This budget also allows for operating funding for post-secondary institutions, because that's what they told us they needed. We invested in the infrastructure. This budget provides for the operating dollars they need to sustain an excellent post-secondary education system. So this is a good budget overall.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** There are a number of ways one could respond to the comments from the member for Simcoe North, but I don't have enough time to get into it. What I'd like to do, if I may, is just talk about something that wasn't in this budget at all, and that is any reference whatsoever to the northern health travel grant. Mr Speaker, you would be very sensitive to that as well.

The fact is that we've been fighting a battle now for the last two years, since this government got re-elected, to try and get this government to acknowledge the inadequacy and unfairness of the northern health travel grant. The former minister, after an enormous amount of pressure—20,000 names signed on petitions; petitions continuing to come forward—finally agreed to at least review the program. The program was reviewed. That is still a secret; the new minister still won't acknowledge it.

This is something that is extraordinarily frustrating to all northern Ontario residents. Certainly I can speak for the constituents in my riding who are watching this evening, and all those who aren't as well, may I say, who have to travel outside their own communities for health care. While the government has funded Cancer Care Ontario to send patients from southern Ontario to the

north for care—either Sudbury or Thunder Bay or other places—and funded 100% of accommodation, travel costs and everything else, the fact is that those who have to travel outside the north for help are receiving a mere subsidy. That's a huge frustration and something we're very disappointed not to see any reference to in the budget.

May I say, in that my time is running low, that this is something we're not going to give up on. All of us on the Ontario Liberal caucus side are very supportive of fixing the northern health travel grant. My northern colleagues and I are going to keep fighting it. The fact is, there should have been some reference made to it in this budget. There was absolutely no reference at all. It's a huge insult to northerners. But we're not going to give up; we're not going to give up at all. We're going to keep fighting until we correct this. I know the Ontario Liberal caucus under Dalton McGuinty will solve this, but we are furious that there was no mention of it in this year's budget.

#### **The Deputy Speaker: Response?**

**Mr Dunlop:** I'd like to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain, the member from Hamilton West and my colleague Mrs Molinari from Thornhill and Mr Gravelle from Thunder Bay-Superior North.

As I said earlier, I'm pleased to support this budget, Bill 45. It's a fair budget for the people of Ontario.

I look back particularly on my years on municipal council, in municipal politics. I've watched with a great deal of interest over the last 20 years budgets presented by different governments and different Treasurers in Ontario. Some of those budgets were presented by my colleague Norm Miller's dad, Frank, when Frank was the Treasurer for the province for a number of years.

I don't think you can put out a perfect budget. As far as I know, people have complained about health care and have complained about education forever. I can remember that in my years on municipal council, I think between 1985 and 1995, the education portion of the tax bill rose 140% while enrolment went up 16%. We complained, as municipal politicians, about the education system. We thought it was too expensive. At that point the province had its role there. I was glad as a municipal politician to see the province take on the process that's used now for funding education.

I just want to say in closing that I've enjoyed this debate this evening. I look forward to further comments from my other colleagues around the room. As I said earlier, I'll be supporting this budget.

2050

#### **The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?**

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** I'll be sharing my time with the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot.

I'd like to start by talking about the budget in general. We just heard a member say you can't get the budget perfect, and then other members say it is the best budget ever. I guess it all depends on the perspective. If you are

a corporation in Ontario, you did quite well. I don't think the average person out there understands that corporations, through this budget, are getting a \$2.2-billion tax cut. In the current fiscal year, and I'm taking this right from the government's own document, it's own budget, corporate taxes are expected to go down from \$9.1 billion to \$8.3 billion, in just one year.

Just think, who doesn't like a tax cut? Corporations like a tax cut. We would like a tax cut. The problem is, we can't afford it. We cannot afford it if we truly believe in a publicly funded education system, if we truly believe in a publicly funded health care system that is available for ourselves and for our loved ones, if and when we need it.

So if you're a corporation, this is a good budget, a good tax cut of \$800 million. Just think what that \$800 million could do with the public health care system or the publicly funded education system, for example. We've heard from the hospitals that they feel they are under-budgeted in the current budget by some \$650 million. As a matter of fact, they're getting \$100 million less than last year. We all know that most of the hospitals in Ontario ran a deficit last year.

This wasn't as a result of poor management and this wasn't as a result of poor delivery of services; this was as a result of not being provided with the needed resources to do the job in the first place. What's going to happen in this coming year is that the government is just going to make it worse so that there will be longer waiting lines in hospitals and fewer beds available for people if and when they need them. I could go on and on along that score.

The other issue relates to the tax credit for education purposes. The government will say that this is not a voucher system, that this is not funding private education, but the bottom line is this: somewhere between \$300 million to \$700 million that otherwise would have come into the coffers of the province of Ontario in revenue is not going to be there. When you add that to the \$2.2 billion of the corporate tax cut, there's going to be somewhere around \$3 billion less coming into the province of Ontario than otherwise would have been the case, and that is a lot of money. On a budget of roughly \$62 billion, that is somewhere around—what?—6% or 7%; no, it's more than that, about 8% or 9% of the entire budget in the province.

**Interjection:** Nine per cent.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Nine per cent of the entire budget of the province. The point that we're simply trying to make is that a budget is not just about expenditures, but it's also about lost revenues.

The government had a choice and it clearly made a choice, whereby it was going to favour its corporate partners and people who send their children to private schools. I have nothing against people who send their children to private schools. If they want to do that, that's fine. They have a choice. They can either send their children to the publicly funded education system or they can send them to private schools and pay for it themselves. They've always had that choice. To somebody

who wants to make that choice, I say, "God bless you." I believe our priority here should be to make sure we have the best publicly funded education system possible so that we give every child in Ontario an equal chance and an equal opportunity to reach the maximum potential that each of them is capable of.

That's one of our main purposes here. That's what Ontario is known for. That's why traditionally, over the last four to five years now, we've been held to have the best quality of life as far as the United Nations is concerned. Closely connected with that is our health care system. I can assure you that with regard to what the province has just done, or what the government is doing with respect to the education system, the same thing is going to happen to our health care system. You are going to allow the system, through underfunding, basically to run down to such an extent that people will be looking for alternatives in exactly the same way they're now starting to look for alternatives in private schooling.

It's going to happen. John Snobelen said so in the speech he gave on the crisis in education some five or six years ago. He had the plan down, which is that the way to get people out of the public systems, whether it's in health care or in education, is to allow those public systems to run down to such a level that people will make other choices.

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** He never said anything of the sort. What a load of drivel.

**Mr Gerretsen:** You may call it a load of drivel, sir, but it's true and the people of Ontario believe it to be true.

The government has made a big to-do over the fact that it has actually increased the total health budget of Ontario, but I think the people of Ontario should know that \$1.2 billion, which is most of the increase for this coming year for the entire health care system, is as a result of increased transfer payments from the federal government. I'll be the first to admit that the federal government for a number of years reduced the payments it gave to the provinces and now they're bringing them back up again. You sit there and say, "Look, we are adding an additional"—I believe—" \$1.4 billion to the health care system," and you try to take credit for the entire thing when in fact \$1.2 billion of that \$1.4 billion is as a result of increased federal payments. That is the way it is.

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** That's not back up to what it used to be.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I hear the minister chirping along, but let's talk about one other thing. Right now we have hearings going on in Walkerton. It's something that unfortunately has sort of drifted off the front pages of the newspapers, but the point is that your own budget documents clearly indicate that over the last five to six years you have allowed the budget of the Ministry of the Environment to go down by some 56%.

That means only one thing: you've got fewer people doing the inspections, fewer people involved in making sure the environment in Ontario is the best it can be.

That's the bottom line. People aren't stupid out there. They realize that if you cut a budget in half, you simply will not have the same number of people to make sure the regulations are enforced, to make sure we have clean drinking water, to make sure sewage systems are inspected etc. If you've got fewer people doing that work, then more things are going to get by, more regulations are not going to be adhered to and the environment of the province is going to suffer. We've seen the results of that in what's happened in Walkerton. Those kinds of situations could very well get worse in time as we go along.

There is a whole other group of people out there suffering from the result of this government's non-action. In the Kingston area, just today I noticed that our community care access centre has to handle a \$3.3-million loss. I know from the number of calls we've been getting over the last three to four years that many people who have traditionally relied on the nursing and home care services that community care access provides to the people in my community, mainly seniors or people who are disabled etc, have been unilaterally cut off, and many of their situations are really dreadful situations. The irony is that in a lot of these situations, if you don't give those people the kind of nursing care and home care they need, they will probably end up in institutions, at a much higher cost, a lot sooner than otherwise would have been the case.

2100

In Kingston, the CCAC has been told to come up with a \$3.3-million loss. As a matter of fact, Nancy Sears, the administrator there, basically says the ministry asked her, and this is a direct quote, "Tell us what would happen if you only have \$25 million," which is \$3.3 million less than last year. Of course they're in a total state of panic, because it means more and more people will be cut off from the services they need.

I have other letters from parents who have developmentally handicapped children and are pleading with the ministry, "Do something." We have children coming out of the school system now who live at home with their parents. Those parents need some support, but because they're 21 and out of the school system they simply can't be helped.

All I'm saying is this: wouldn't it have been wonderful if some of that \$2.2 billion in tax cuts or the \$700 million of tax credits now going to the private schools could have been used to help the most vulnerable in our society, whether the elderly or the developmentally handicapped? That's the kind of budget we should have seen in this province.

**Mr McMeekin:** I'm pleased to add my voice to the debate this evening. As one of the newest members of this Legislative Assembly, I recall arriving here with high expectations and high hopes. I believed then, as I believe now, that despite our political differences we might work together to accomplish a recognition of the high values and ideals that so many Ontarians hold to be self-evident, those historic values and ideals that make this province

such a wonderful place in which to live, work, play and raise a family.

Every government must understand and appreciate the unique opportunity afforded them when they present a provincial budget. Simply put, government budgets ought to be a reflection of the basic values, visions and priorities of society.

Mr Speaker, having read and studied this budget, I need to express to you and members of the Legislative Assembly my profound sense of disappointment. Clearly, this budget is out of step with the basic values and beliefs of the people I have the privilege of representing. While some government members may find this hard to believe, there really is more to life than tax cuts and some ideologically driven race to the bottom with respect to the provision of historic services that our citizens have come to value. Interestingly, one simply has to examine the past five years to recognize the supreme price Ontarians have had to pay as a result of the narrowly defined choices of this government, choices driven by one-dimensional tax cut policies, policies which show favour to the few at the expense of Ontario's many working families.

Let's examine the costs of recent government decisions to Ontario's working families. I'm a pretty simple guy, and the best way I know to share my message with the people of Ontario isn't to concentrate so much on what was in the budget but rather to focus for a few moments on what wasn't in that document. Here's my top 10 list of what this government forgot to tell the people of Ontario in their spring budget.

First, public education is in trouble. Under this government, \$1.8 billion has been slashed from education spending, extracurricular activities have been curtailed, libraries closed and English-as-a-second-language, music and art programs have been cancelled, while funds for new curriculum textbooks, school transportation and the general upkeep of schools have been dramatically reduced. In fact, the real per pupil spending by this government has decreased across Ontario by some \$918. It's difficult for me to understand how this government can pretend to suggest they support public education when all outward and visible indications show the exact opposite.

On the post-secondary side, tuition fees have increased over 50% in the last five years, while real spending on post-secondary education has been reduced by over \$300 million.

In the wake of Walkerton and the very serious concern across Ontario related to the quality and safety of our drinking water, overall funding for the Ministry of the Environment and the inspectors they employ has been reduced by 56%. Incredibly, this provincial government is now prepared to allocate less than \$50 million to correct the very real problems we have with our Ontario drinking water plants.

Health care—my favourite—is a mess. Hospitals currently face between a \$650-million to \$750-million shortfall to provide current patient care, not to mention future needs, Mr Minister. No new funding has been provided

to relieve the nursing shortage crisis in Ontario or to finance much-needed primary care reform. The lack of funding for new capital projects, Mr Minister, is once again causing an offloading of health care costs to municipalities and local charities—you know what I'm talking about. With the exception of Alberta, no province in Canada, if you can believe it, spends a lower percentage—5.35% of their gross domestic product—to meet the health care needs of our people.

Let me take a minute to refer specifically to the situation in Hamilton. The Hamilton Health Sciences Corp this year will face a funding shortfall of some \$43 million. Unless things change dramatically, patient care will be severely affected, which will result in longer waiting times for surgery. In addition, we face the possible reduction of 150 acute care beds and the layoff of up to 450 hospital workers—very disconcerting.

In agriculture, the Harris government has closed OMAFRA offices across Ontario and reduced total agricultural spending by 20% since 1995.

On the municipal infrastructure side, which includes roads and sewers, less will be invested this year than in any of the previous 15 years. After dumping \$600 million of new costs on our already beleaguered municipal property taxpayers, the provincial government's total investment in public transit is an embarrassingly low \$30 million.

For just a moment I want to talk about my Let's Build a Bridge municipal tour. I've heard concerns about this government's abandonment of Ontario municipalities. In fact, one eastern Ontario municipal leader informed me that municipalities would do so much better if the province would simply leave them alone. In Orangeville, another municipal leader noted that when it came to assisting their local concerns, the province could only provide its undivided evasion. In the new city of Hamilton, the mayor and council still await the provision of adequate transitional funding, the lowering of the arbitrary and discriminatory business education tax and this government's keeping of their revenue-neutral promises of a couple of years back with respect to provincial downloading.

Social housing has been completely abandoned by the this government, in spite of \$170 million of federal matching funds available. The province simply refuses to get involved.

We could talk about hydro deregulation and the privatization, which is going to cause hydro rates to skyrocket, some estimate, as high as 30%.

#### 2110

Since 1995, the provincial debt escalated from \$84 billion to \$114 billion, and we spend \$218,000 an hour on interest just on what's been added since 1995. Let me ask a simple question: do we really believe our health care, education and environment are in better shape today than they were five years ago? No, we don't. How do we feel about the offloading of provincial costs to municipalities, the abandonment of our agricultural community, increased hydro costs and the growing problem of

homelessness? It's simply wrong. As I travel across my wonderful riding of ADFA, people express to me their concerns and fears about where Ontario is heading. My constituents want dependable health care, a strong public education system, clean air, clean water and clean government.

This evening I've offered but 10 examples of what's really happening in Ontario. There are many more I could add. The priorities of this government are not shared by me or the people I represent. That is why I will stand with my Liberal colleagues, individuals who have a broader vision of what's needed for Ontario, and vote against this budget.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Christopherson:** Again, I would like to commend my colleagues in the official opposition, the members from Kingston and the Islands and Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot. I think the member from Kingston and the Islands was one of the few people this evening who raised the issue of the environment. It's been raised a little, but again, if it weren't for this issue around the privatization of our public education system, it would have gotten a lot more attention, particularly in light of evidence that's now coming out at the inquiry where, sure enough, as we said at the time, you knew the cuts you were making were going to do damage and put the health of our citizens at risk. You knew it, and the evidence is now coming out.

You'd think, if for none other than just political reasons—even if you really didn't care enough to do it out of caring—you would have made sure there was enough money going into the Ministry of the Environment, at a time you're giving away \$2.4 billion in tax cuts, to at least make it look like you're trying to repair some of the damage. But, no, nowhere near the funding necessary to take the Ministry of the Environment back to where the citizens of this province deserve it to be.

My friend from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot also raised the issue of the environment. He raised a number of other critical issues that affect our new city of Hamilton. Let me just focus on his mentioning the pending legislation that will eliminate by law the ability of hospital boards to run deficits. What does that mean? It means Hamilton citizens and their families are left outside the door because the hospital can't run a deficit when they run out of money. If you can't run a deficit and you can't borrow the money, then the patients wait in the cold. Thanks a lot.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** I'm happy to respond to the comments that were made by my colleagues from Kingston and from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot. I'll have an opportunity myself to speak to this budget bill tomorrow afternoon, and I'm obviously going to dwell on the issue that is of gravest concern to me overall in the budget: the introduction of a tax credit which will allow for privatization and the creation of two-tier educational system.

But I'm glad to have this very brief opportunity to comment on the issues my colleagues have raised around

the impact of tax cuts. Consecutive tax cuts coming from this government have made cutting taxes the priority over the provision of any kind of services to the residents and citizens of Ontario, but in particular in this budget, the \$2.2-billion corporate tax, which will make Ontario the jurisdiction that has lower corporate taxes than anywhere in North America, or maybe on a par with Alberta. That, as my colleagues have described it, truly is a race to the bottom. Of course, it's not going to serve us well economically, because if you try to be the lowest, there's always going to be somebody who's lower.

My leader, Dalton McGuinty, has repeatedly said the goal of Ontario should be to compete economically by being the best, by having the best education system, the best health care system, the best place to live, and that includes the quality of our environment. But, of course, this government, in making tax cuts its priority, has created chaos in our educational system. My colleagues have touched on the kinds of cuts that have been made. My leader has touched on the 35,000 young people who are waiting for special education. We've seen the squeezing of Ontario hospitals. We've seen chaos in our health care system. My colleague touched on the \$43-million deficit faced by the Hamilton Health Sciences Corp, the hospital that this government saw fit to take into trusteeship earlier this year rather than actually deal with the reality of the problems they've created with their budgets: no concern about impact at all.

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** It's a pleasure to rise and comment on the comments made by the members for Kingston and the Islands and the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot.

Members opposite talked about a variety of things in their speeches and that they don't like Ontario today, they don't like the picture of Ontario today. A lot of people ought to think back to 1995, when Ontario had about its fourth consecutive \$10-billion-plus deficit. They racked up \$50 billion in debt. The people of this province are still, and will be for many more years, paying interest on that debt. We had extremely high unemployment rates. We had runaway expenditures in the province. We had taxes that the Liberals and the NDP had put on people for 10 years that made us one of the most highly taxed jurisdictions in North America, one of the most uncompetitive tax jurisdictions in North America. We had 1.3 million people on welfare, and they're proud of that record. They're really proud of the record of having 1.3 million people on welfare. That was a tragedy.

Today we've got one of the lowest unemployment rates we've had for years. We're getting an increasingly more competitive tax jurisdiction. We've seen almost 600,000 people move from welfare to work in the past six years. We've created about 825,000 jobs in the past five years. That's a record to be proud about because, as more people work, more people are paying taxes. Every time we've reduced taxes, revenues have gone up. We do conservative estimates every year in the budget about our revenue stream. That's called responsible budgeting. Quite often our revenues end up exceeding what's

budgeted, and the members opposite know that. They in fact complain that we do conservative budgeting, but it works.

**Mr Bartolucci:** I'd like to thank the members for Kingston and the Islands and Ancaster for their comments. Indeed, they provided the true picture of what this budget is really all about. This budget fails the working families of Ontario because it fails public education. It does not believe in public education. This government doesn't believe in public education.

The Ontario Liberals and Dalton McGuinty believe working families want a strong public education system, and we will fight for it. This budget fails working families because it invests \$300 million less in post-secondary education than we did five years ago. That's a failure this government will be responsible for in the years to come. It fails the people of Ontario because it fails our health care system.

The member for Kingston and the Islands spent a little bit of time talking about his community care access centre and the \$3-million deficit they're going to face this year and how they're going to address that. That's universal across all the community care access centres in Ontario. Eight of the nine community care access centres in northern Ontario predict a \$20-million deficit, and do you know what? The only way they're going to recover it is by a reduction in services. So this government fails the people who require community care access services.

This government also fails the people who have to travel from northern Ontario for cancer treatment, at 34 cents a kilometre one way. This was not addressed in the budget. This government fails the people of northern Ontario, continues to discriminate against the people of northern Ontario, continues to practise health care apartheid for those northern cancer patients who have to travel for treatment. Because of that, this budget and this government are a failure to the people of Ontario.

2120

**Mr McMeekin:** I'm pleased to sum up. I want to spend a couple of minutes talking about public education as well. I want to say at the outset just how disappointed I was that this government moved ahead, I think, frankly, without the integrity that we need in terms of political process or without any kind of mandate to speak to this issue.

Shortly after I was elected in the by-election, I had a conversation with the minister about a number of changes that might be forthcoming. I took the liberty of suggesting to her at the time that if she and her government were going to move ahead with something like the funding of independent schools, they ought to strike a select committee of the Ontario Legislature and not spring it on anybody out of left field, or in this case right field. I thought at the time that that made some sense, and I continue to believe that there might well have been some options, some available discussion and debate that we could have had sensibly about this, rather than see it handled the way it was.

I was pleased to read in the throne speech and in the budget about this provincial government's move toward choice within the public school system. In fact, that's something we were pleased to initiate and were pleased that the government picked up on. The problem fundamentally is that this government, in its proposal for tax credits, has trouble being taken seriously when it has yanked \$1.8 billion out of public education, where teachers are so stressed out, where we have overcrowding in the classroom, where parents and students are having to raise money for textbooks and computers, where teachers are leaving the public school system literally in droves, when children need to wait months for a psychological assessment, and when we've got such a desperate need to reclaim our inner-city and rural-based schools.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Christepherson:** In the six or seven minutes that I have, I would like to put on the record my strong opposition to this bill.

I want to begin by responding to a comment just made by the member for Niagara Falls, because he talked about debt and what it meant to future generations. I'm paraphrasing, but he was basically asking, why should the next generation be burdened with that debt? I want to say to that member that I'd like to see some of that concern about the next generation being applied to the education system that he was lucky enough to benefit from. It's infuriating that you make the argument that you care about the next generation in terms of dollars, but you don't want to acknowledge the fact that you, the government of the day, are not providing the next generation with the same quality of education that the rest of us enjoyed. If you were one of those who were fortunate enough to go on to post-secondary education, the debt factor, the personal debt that you now take, by and large didn't exist in the past. What about that future debt burden that's being placed on our children? Where's your concern about that?

I had an opportunity to talk to Ray Mulholland, who's the trustee for ward 4. That's my old ward, when I was an alderman on Hamilton city council. Actually, he's now the chair of the board. Ray has been serving—I don't know—it's got to be close to 30 years or better, doing a phenomenal job. Anyway, I talked to Ray earlier today about the fiscal reality, not the Tory fantasyland that you want to paint about how wonderful everything is in our schools. I wanted to hear from the chair of my board in Hamilton about the reality.

Do you know what the reality is? It begins with the fact that the board has been forced, as a result of your funding formula and the regulations and policies and laws that you brought in, to lay off 54 teachers who teach English as a second language.

Sir John A. Macdonald Secondary School is one of the largest high schools in our community. There are over 1,000 students. My office spoke with Principal Murray Kilby earlier today, and they confirm that there are between 50 and 60 different countries represented in the

student body there. Many of them are new Canadians. The only chance they've got is to get an early grasp on the overwhelmingly predominant language in our province. As a result of your actions, the teachers who teach those children to speak English are going to be fired. Again I call on government members: stand in your place and tell me how losing 54 teachers who teach English as a second language helps all those kids.

The shortfall in terms of the funding that you've offered—it's so infuriating. The shortfall right now is between \$5 million and \$8 million, and that is just to barely keep their nose above water. When I say that, it means that a lot of the programs and a lot of the teachers and a lot of the assistance that were there still won't be there, but at least fiscally they can keep their head above water. What did they get instead? Where they were expecting between \$8 million and \$10 million, they got \$5 million. They're going to have a deficit of \$3 million at least, or they're going to make more cuts. That means more kids get hurt.

This is the public system that you tell us you can afford to divert \$300 million away from. Let me tell you very directly: you can't afford to do that to the public education system in Hamilton without it affecting the quality of education and the future of the kids who are in the system.

By the way, there was this big announcement that you were going to give an extra \$1 million to offset the increase in the cost of energy. Guess what? Ten days ago the board was informed that the \$5 million they got, which should have been between \$8 million and \$10 million to start with, included the \$1 million that was supposed to help offset the cost, which by the way it didn't do because those costs were \$1.2 million. So there's \$200,000 that had to be found anyway, and it turns out that that \$1 million is part of the \$5 million.

How are our trustees supposed to get on top of this? How are they supposed to provide the quality of educa-

tion that you benefited from and that I benefited from? We did, you know. We benefited from those investments, investments in the public education system, and these kids don't.

Let me tell you, these are not the folks whose parents are spending a couple of extra weeks on the beaches of Bermuda with their tax cut—far, far from it. In fact, Ray went out of his way to mention to me his concern because a lot of the demographics of those he represents in ward 4, and whom I used to represent when I was on Hamilton city council, are such that they can't scrape up the other 50% of the money required if they did choose that they wanted to go to the private system. So when you say you're giving parents choice, you give choice to those who are prepared to make whatever sacrifice necessary to scratch every dollar together or those who have an abundant amount of money to pay for it in the first place.

Let me say this in the closing moments. If you decide, and obviously you have, that the issue of fairness and equity is driving this because parents deserve choice, if you walk through that doorway, you've crossed that threshold, you now believe that there's an element of inequity here, unfairness, and you're going to do something about it. I'd like to know why you think it's fair to stop at \$300 million. If you've already made the argument that it's inequity that's driving this and you want to give people choice, shouldn't you be funding all of it? My point being, that's what's coming. Ultimately there will be 100% funding. It might not be tomorrow, it might not be in five years, but it's coming, and it's going to come at the further erosion and expense of our public education system. I say shame on every one of you who stands up and casts your most cherished vote in favour of this budget.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 2130.*

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Parliament of Ontario

No. 21A

Nº 21A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario  
Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario  
Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 30 May 2001

Mercredi 30 mai 2001



Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 30 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 30 mai 2001

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### ONTARIO COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

**Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre):** The Ontario College of Art and Design is Canada's oldest and largest post-secondary institution dedicated to advanced education in art and design. In the year 2001, OCAD celebrates 125 years of contributing to growth and change in Canada's visual culture.

The college is going through a period of transition and growth. A new president has been appointed to provide leadership for all academic aspects of the college's operations, with particular emphasis on the college's proposal for degree-granting status. The college has applied for degree-granting status and has also received a \$25-million start-up investment through the SuperBuild growth fund to create a new centre for design.

This new centre will be named the Sharp Centre for Design, in recognition of the largest personal gift to the college in its 125-year history. OCAD graduate Rosalie Sharp and her husband, Isadore Sharp, founder of the Four Seasons Hotel chain, are contributing \$5 million to the college's capital campaign.

It is obvious that the college has laid the foundation for a stronger curriculum and resource base that will lead to a new future for arts and design education in Ontario. The college has proposed changes in its governance which will enable this goal to be achieved.

As a graduate of the college and a former vice-president, I urge all members to support the enabling legislation, which I expect and hope will be introduced in the near future.

### VOLUNTEERS

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** I rise today to thank and congratulate the volunteers and volunteer organizations in Perth-Middlesex for the contribution they make to the economic vitality and social well-being of their communities.

Last night in Stratford I took part in the Ontario Volunteer Service Award ceremony, where 60 volunteers from my riding, representing 15 different groups, were

recognized for up to 50 years of commitment and dedicated service.

The highlight of the evening was the three songs performed by the St Marys Children's Choir, under the direction of their music director and volunteer award recipient, Eileen Baldwin. For 20 years the St Marys Children's Choir has been performing at venues around the world and has received numerous awards.

Last week I also attended a volunteer recognition reception for the Stratford Area Association for Community Living. I also attended a tree-planting and park bench dedication ceremony in Listowel to honour and recognize the volunteers of the Perth-Huron Victorian Order of Nurses.

The recent volunteer recognition ceremonies in my riding are timely, as the United Nations has declared 2001 as International Year of the Volunteer. Ontario's theme is "Everyone counts." This theme accurately describes the volunteers in my riding who dedicate their time and energy to help others in their communities.

Please join me in recognizing and celebrating the achievements of the volunteers in Perth-Middlesex.

### SPEEDING OFFENCES

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** We've all heard of the term "road rage." I want to speak to the Minister of Transportation about something that I call "road madness."

Just last Saturday, if you can believe it, three Michigan men riding motorcycles were each fined \$1,500 for reaching speeds in excess of 200 kilometres an hour in a 60-kilometre zone on E.C. Row Expressway in Windsor. The day before, an 18-year-old Michigan man was nailed with \$1,500 in fines as he was clocked travelling 100 kilometres an hour over the speed limit. That was on two occasions on Highway 401 in the Chatham-Kent area.

The problem and the real crime of it is that we probably won't collect those fines. They'll go scot-free because they get a summons, they head off back to Michigan and they just don't come back. I think we should do what they do in Michigan, Indiana and Ohio: give our officers a credit card device and collect it on the spot, or you lose your licence until you show up for your summons.

#### Interjection: Shame.

**Mr Crozier:** Absolutely. I think it's a crime that this government is letting these criminals get away on our highways. I'm going to speak to the Minister of Transportation about it.

## INVESTMENT FRAUD

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** Over the past few months, my community office in Etobicoke North has received dozens of phone calls about bogus investment scams. These scamsters are an inventive lot, some netting the fraudster nearly \$2 million. Scams include unlicensed individuals selling securities; affinity group fraud targeting religious, ethnic and professional groups; and business investment scams involving pay telephones and automatic teller machines. In addition, beware Internet fraud in the form of "callable" certificates of deposit, Ponzi, pyramid schemes, Internet stock price manipulations and insider trading.

What kind of help is available for Ontario investors? If you suspect a securities representative is not registered, contact the Ontario Securities Commission at 1-877-785-1555. Second, check out the Small Investors Protection Association at [www.sipa.to](http://www.sipa.to).

Finally, trust your instinct when it comes to investment approaches and always remember: if it sounds too good to be true, you can be sure it is. Caveat emptor.

1340

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** It sounds like the member from Etobicoke North has offered good advice for the government's budget.

Ontario Liberals are opposed to private school vouchers and in favour of a strong system of public education. Earlier today, almost all the members of the Liberal caucus and our leader, Dalton McGuinty, took to the streets of the greater Toronto area our strong commitment to public education. At 46 subway stops this morning and at 28 GO train stations tomorrow we're delivering a strong message to the people of Ontario in favour of public education. But we will not stop there. Over the next number of days and weeks and months, we intend to take this campaign to the heartland of Tory support.

On Saturday morning we're going to take a big group of people to campaign in the riding of Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge, because we know there are strong supporters of public education in that riding.

Just yesterday morning our education critic was in the riding of Port Perry, where 75 people showed up on one day's notice to express their strong commitment to public education and their opposition to the views of their government member, who has been supporting this private school voucher system.

So to all those Tory members who hide out here and say they're doing the work on behalf of their constituents, we're going to work hard to represent the views of the vast majority of people of Ontario who stand in strong support with us in favour of a strong system of public education and against private school vouchers. We urge people who want to come and bring that campaign to the Minister of Education's riding on Saturday to meet with us at 10 am.

## PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** New Democrats stood proudly with OPSEU members today in front of this building. We stood there shoulder to shoulder, arm in arm with Leah Casselman and women and men who work in our public service and who represent thousands of others across this province who have provided the very best of public service over the course of decades and generations.

We stood there in solidarity and in contempt of this government. I want the Premier to know he hasn't fooled anybody out there. We know, public sector workers know and people in communities across this province know, Mr Premier, that your attack on the public service is very much about privatization of every facet of the public sector here in Ontario. It's about handing over all those institutions and services that have been built by working Ontario people—women and men, parents, grandparents and their kids—over the course of decades and generations. It's about turning them over to your corporate friends, inevitably American. It's about converting public tax dollars into private profits, not a penny of which will even remain in this province or this country. You've sold out the province. You're selling out public sector workers in an attack on unions that is unprecedented but so very much typical of your style, Mr Premier. Your disdain for working people, your disgust for professional, committed public service workers, I tell you, is generating their contempt for you and the contempt of the public of this province.

## CANADIAN AMPUTEE HOCKEY TEAM

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** As the Stanley Cup final between the New Jersey Devils and the Colorado Avalanche is well underway, many Canadian hockey fans are searching for a Canadian team to support. A Canadian team that is truly worthy of our support is the Canadian Amputee Hockey Team.

Thornhill became the proud host of the Canadian Amputee Hockey Team and the CANAM event that took place on the weekend of May 25 to 27. Canadian amputee athletes from across Canada played a similarly physically challenged team from the United States on Saturday at the Thornhill Community Centre. This is the first time such an event has been held in Canada. Many NHL old-timers were in attendance to sign autographs before the game on Saturday to lend their support. On Sunday, players from each team travelled to the Hockey Hall of Fame to hang the actual signed jerseys and inaugurate a display from the first-ever amputee hockey game held in Lake Placid at the first CANAM event.

The Canadian Amputee Hockey Committee is a committee of the Canadian Amputee Sports Association organized for the sole purpose of promoting ice hockey for all amputees. The committee continues to encourage other amputees to rehabilitate and participate as elite athletes and to have amputee hockey become a Paralympic sport.

On behalf of the residents of Thornhill, I would like to wish the Canadian Amputee Hockey Committee and all their athletes the best of luck in the future, and may the courage they exhibit be an example to all athletes.

#### FATHER CHARLES ARMSTRONG

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** Yesterday my community and indeed Ontario lost a great teacher and friend, Father Charles Armstrong. "Army" Armstrong, as he was known by his friends and students, began teaching in Ontario with the Basilian Fathers in 1934. Father Armstrong brought high school football to Ontario, coached generations of young people in our community and was a tribute to the Basilian Order and all it stands for. Indeed, the Basilians' motto of goodness, discipline and knowledge was incorporated well in Father Armstrong's life. He had a profound impact on thousands upon thousands of young people in our province. He taught me and served as a friend and inspiration and a mentor in so many ways.

All of us in Windsor and Essex county, and indeed across Ontario, are saddened at the loss of Father Armstrong who, in my view, stood for everything that's good in education in this province and stood for a better way for all of us. He was a remarkable man.

This morning I had the opportunity to speak to Father Ronald Cullen, another legend in the Basilian community and in our community. He said to me that as we celebrate Father Armstrong's life we're all fortunate today because we have another friend in heaven. He was a great man and a real inspiration to all of us.

#### EVENTS IN RIDING OF NIAGARA FALLS

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I rise to present a statement on behalf of the member from Niagara Falls, Bart Maves, who was unable to make it.

"I'm pleased to announce to this House an award that has been received by a high school in my constituency, St Paul High School. For the second year in a row they have won a Golden Web award. St Paul's was recognized for its professional and informative Web site. I have visited this site and encourage all members of this House to take the time to take a look at it as well. This site can be found at [www.niagararc.com/spchs/index.htm](http://www.niagararc.com/spchs/index.htm).

"I extend my congratulations to the designers of this site," and I apologize for any mispronunciations: "Christopher Ainsley, Corrado Coia, Adam Dunn, Mr Dipersio, Mr Mechelsie, Francis Ambrosia, Janet Leung, Adam Jackson and Dan Costabile, and St Paul High School for their innovative work."

"While speaking of St Paul's Catholic school, I would like to give my condolences to the family, colleagues and former students of Fred Bilanzola. Mr Bilanzola was an art teacher at St Paul High School. He died in a tragic car accident when he lost control of his car on a curve on a

snowy road. Mr Bilanzola was a well-liked teacher, and his passing is indeed a great loss to the school."

#### VISITORS

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I hope all members will join me in welcoming students from Brian Public School who have come to visit us here today.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** It's not a point of order, but we welcome our friends.

#### OMNIBUS LEGISLATION

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm sending to you via a page the text I will be referring to as well as the references. I'm standing on a point of order with respect to Bill 57, the Government Efficiency Act, 2001. It is our respectful position that the bill is out of order, and we're calling upon you to rule as such. I would like, as briefly as possible, to outline the reasons why.

First, as you know, there's no reference to omnibus bills in our standing orders. We have to refer to Beauchesne's Parliamentary Rules and Forms, page 192, and I quote, "Although there is no specific set of rules or guidelines governing the content of a bill"—and this is very important—"there should be a theme of relevancy amongst the contents of a bill. They must be relevant to and subject to the umbrella which is raised by the terminology of the long title of the bill." The theme of relevancy and the terminology of the long title of the bill are significant, then, and very operative.

1350

By my count, Bill 57 amends well over 50 different statutes. It repeals several others. It amends acts under the aegis of 15 different ministries. While some of the proposed amendments are admittedly housekeeping in nature, like the changes in keeping with the proper names of the courts, the bill also, and this is very much the focus of our argument, contains very controversial amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act that will undermine some of the most basic rights enjoyed by millions of working men and women in Ontario.

Mr Speaker, the cumulative changes proposed in the 100-plus pages of this legislation, I submit to you, lack a theme of relevancy. In fact, upon reading the bill, one discovers that they are completely different from one another. The minister has given the bill—it was Minister Sterling, you'll recall, who was the author of the bill—the broad and very non-definitive title of An Act to promote government efficiency and to improve services to taxpayers by amending or repealing certain Acts, in an attempt to encompass vastly different changes under one umbrella.

Unlike so many of the bills with similar names introduced by this government, Bill 57 is not merely a public relations exercise. That is apparent from reading it. It represents yet another effort on the part of the Tories to limit

the democratic functioning of this Legislature by sweeping many diverse and controversial matters under one rug. Once again the government is seeking to ram legislation through this House that contains vastly different changes to unrelated statutes, thereby preventing full and focused debate. It's simply not possible to adequately deal with the myriad of issues included in this bill in its present form. Members of the Legislative Assembly cannot do justice to all the important components of this legislation, because it is simply far too broad.

There are parts of Bill 57 that I would agree are properly dealt with in an omnibus bill. I refer to schedule D, which amends 37 different statutes to change the reference to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations to the new title of the Minister of Commercial and Business Services. That's in itself benign and consistent with the theme of what is an acceptable omnibus bill. It makes sense to accomplish these kinds of benign housekeeping matters by means of omnibus legislation and the New Democrats have no objection to that, of course.

However, there are other elements of Bill 57 that are substantively different from these housekeeping amendments. The previously mentioned changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act are the most striking example. These amendments represent, respectfully, substantive changes, Mr Speaker. Frankly, they have nothing to do with the efficient operation of the government of Ontario, as the bill's long title would suggest, and it's very relevant to refer to, as a matter of fact it's imperative to refer to, the long title. These amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act of course are buried deep within the 15 schedules and the 100-plus pages of the bill. They will never be afforded the appropriate scrutiny and debate if the bill goes forward in its present form.

Mr Speaker, I call upon you to allow the people of Ontario to hear how the changes in this bill will affect their working lives. Members of this Legislature are entitled, in fact I submit we're obliged, to speak to these important, substantive changes that are inconsistent with the other aspects of Bill 57. Quite frankly, when one reads those amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, one discovers that workers will be put at risk and lives will be lost.

I ask you to consider as well what committee hearings would look like. I acknowledge that the Speaker doesn't have to necessarily entertain the prospect of committee hearings because they may not be provided for. But should they be provided, I ask you to look at what committee hearings would look like if the bill were to be referred in its current form: the number of bureaucrats and presenters needed to address and carry its components would be unwieldy; the cost to the taxpayer of trying to adequately address every aspect included in this bill would be staggering; there would be the time wasted in juggling dozens of speakers in several venues.

The New Democrats are proposing a solution that would bring true efficiency and accountability to the process. We are asking that Bill 57 be broken into relevant

parts so that we don't have to waste time on what are, again, these mere housekeeping amendments that can be dealt with quickly, and so that we can focus on what are the most dramatic, striking and contentious parts of the bill.

Moving to the matter of the precedents that I know you are aware of, Mr Speaker, we know there have been precedents at the federal and provincial levels to suggest that the severance of an omnibus bill is something that ought to happen at the political level. For instance, when the New Democratic Party was the government of this province, it agreed with the other two parties, after their raising the matter by way of objection, to divide Bill 29, a budget bill that was introduced on June 1, 1993, and Bill 60, introduced on May 18, 1994, because it was acknowledged there were certain bits of legislation in those two bills that were contentious and that warranted being removed from the broader bill. I would remind the Speaker that this was at the request of what were then the two opposition parties, the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party, respectively.

The government of that time listened to the concerns of the opposition parties of the day and accommodated those concerns, but when that can't or won't happen, and that hasn't happened in the context of Bill 57—that is to say, there hasn't been a political solution—we then rely upon the Speaker. I put it to you that every member of this assembly relies upon the Speaker. You are the only recourse we have.

I want to pay particular attention to the rulings of Speakers in both the House of Commons in Ottawa and in this Legislature. Previous Speakers have agreed with points of order that address the absence of a theme of relevancy in various omnibus bills, but have not supported those points of order on procedural grounds, have denied them on procedural grounds. This scenario, I submit to you, is very different. Indeed, Bill 57 lacks the necessary theme of relevancy among its amendments.

I argue with you that I am raising this point of order at the appropriate stage in the life of the bill. Bill 57 has been given first reading. We haven't commenced second reading. So this is the appropriate time to consider its orderliness and determine if this Legislature would be better served—and that, I submit, is one of the tests. Would the Legislature, would this assembly, be better served by splitting this bill into more manageable pieces?

The ruling made by Honourable Lucien Lamoureux, Speaker of Canada's House of Commons, on January 26, 1971, and this is with respect to a point of order about an omnibus bill: "Where do we stop? Where is the point of no return? [The honourable members] said that we might reach a point where we would have only one bill, a bill at the start of the session for the improvement of the quality of life in Canada which would include every single proposed piece of legislation for the session. That would be an omnibus bill with a capital O and a capital B. But would it be acceptable legislation? There must be a point where we can go beyond what is acceptable from a strictly parliamentary standpoint."

He then continues, "There must be a point where an omnibus bill becomes more than an omnibus bill and is not acceptable from a procedural standpoint.... the government has followed these practices that have been accepted in the past, rightly or wrongly, but that we may have reached the point where we are going too far and that omnibus bills seek to take in too much."

I respect and understand the previous rulings made by you, sir, and your predecessors in this Legislature. I also suggest to you very respectfully that we've reached the point referred to by Speaker Lamoureux. Bill after omnibus bill, time allocation motions, one after the other: I put to you, Mr Speaker, that today is the day where you are being called upon to bring democracy back to this Legislature.

#### 1400

In that vein, carrying on with Speaker Lamoureux's ruling, because it speaks to the procedural question that prevented previous Speakers from ruling in favour of splitting or severing an omnibus bill, Speaker Lamoureux stated that in his view, "It should be the responsibility of the Chair, when such a bill is introduced and given first reading, to take the initiative and raise the matter for the consideration of the House by way of a point of order." He advised that when another omnibus bill was proposed, "It should be scrutinized at first reading stage, when honourable members will be given the opportunity of expressing their view and the Chair can express its view either that the bill goes too far or that it is acceptable from a procedural standpoint." Here again, Speaker, I'm submitting to you the phrase "goes too far": does it cross that line?

Clearly, Speaker Lamoureux understood that it was within his power to rule an omnibus bill out of order, and based on this precedent that it must be raised after first reading but not before the Parliament has commenced second reading, we are raising our point of order at this stage in Bill 57's course through this Legislature after first reading but before second reading has commenced or before it's been called for second reading.

There's more. I ask you to refer to page 618 in the text House of Commons Procedure and Practice, where it is written, "The Speaker has expressed deep concerns about the right of members to make themselves heard properly, and so has occasionally felt the need to suggest what remedies members have to deal with the dilemma of having to approve several legislative provisions at the same time." The issue again is, what remedies do members have to obtain relief from what I put to you is the very issue in Bill 57, several legislative provisions at the same time?

James Jerome spoke to this concern on May 11, 1977: "[Omnibus legislation] still leaves ... some very deep concern about whether our practices in respect of bills do in fact provide a remedy for the very legitimate complaint of the honourable member that a bill of this kind gives the government, under our practices, the right to demand one decision on a number of quite different ... subjects.... I think an honourable member ... ought to

have the right to compel the House to vote on each separate question." A very important reference. Speaker Jerome, 1977, House of Commons, spoke very specifically to the right of members to vote on issues or themes standing independent of each other and not to be compelled to cast one vote when in fact there should perhaps be many votes. Again, have some regard for what Speaker Jerome said: a member of the House—with respect, that's us, Speaker—ought to have the right to compel the House to vote on each separate question.

Speaker, you yourself registered your concern about omnibus legislation when you, sir, told this House on December 2, 1999, "I have found that omnibus bills cause me great concern.... The opportunities for members in this place to give due and sufficient consideration to legislation should be respected and evolving practice over the last few years has tended to work against that." You, sir, as Speaker, recognized this evolving practice, this trend, this tendency. You expressed your concern about omnibus bills. You expressed your concern about the ability of members of this Legislature, each and every one of us, all 103 of us, to give due and sufficient consideration to legislation.

I ask you to look at Beauchesne's sixth edition, page 3, which defines in a very fundamental way the principles of Canadian parliamentary law: "To protect a minority and restrain the improvidence or tyranny of a majority; to secure the transaction of public business in an orderly manner; to enable every member to express opinions within limits necessary to preserve decorum and prevent an unnecessary waste of time; to give abundant opportunity for the consideration of every measure, and to prevent any legislative action being taken upon sudden impulse."

Finally, Speaker, I refer you to standing order 1(b), again of fundamental consideration in the course, I submit to you, of almost every ruling you might be called upon to make. Standing order 1(b), which very much ought to set the standard, ought to set the tone, for every ruling by any Speaker, concerns the democratic rights of members and the right to speak on all matters before the House.

I'm asking you, sir, to consider the cumulative negative effect on the democratic functioning of this House if we allow Bill 57 to be debated and passed in its current omnibus form.

Since this government was first elected in 1995, it has introduced an unprecedented number of omnibus bills in this Legislature. I refer you back to your own observation of 1999 when the Speaker referred to a trend, an evolution of practice, and expressed regret and concern about it.

The House spends much less time, sometimes no time at all, examining legislation in committee.

This government—and the record speaks for itself—uses time allocation motions more frequently than any of its predecessors and on virtually every bill of substance that is brought before the House.

Speaker, because I feel it's within your mandate, within your jurisdiction to do this, I ask you to consider

the implication of the government's actions with respect to democracy, very fundamental small-d democracy as people across this province understand it in very much a day-to-day sort of fashion. I ask you to note that we are not elected to simply rubber-stamp the government's every whim. Every one of us is elected to speak on behalf of our constituents and, hopefully, on behalf of all Ontarians to create a better provincial community. I put it to you that if our voices aren't heard, then the people's voices have been silenced, and that is not democracy by anyone's definition.

I submit to you that a member's right to speak to a bill and, most importantly, to address all the components within a bill adequately is a matter of great importance to this House and to the democratic process. I'm asking you to intervene in order to preserve the limited rights of members to fully address bills before this assembly by ruling that omnibus Bill 57, Government Efficiency Act, 2001, is out of order in its present form.

You see, Speaker, it's not a matter of whether the bill is long enough. Mere volume doesn't determine whether or not a severance ought to occur. A bill could be a rather short one, but if a bill contains disparate themes where one vote wouldn't adequately represent a given member's support for one significant part of it as compared to their opposition to another significant part of it, that's what creates an omnibus bill. I submit, with respect, it's not enough to say, "Well, this bill isn't as long as another omnibus bill about which a point of order was denied on the issue of severance." That's not the test. The test is as has been outlined in the rules and the precedents.

I submit that you, sir, this Speaker in 2001, have an opportunity to do something good, indeed great, for democracy.

You have acknowledged and there is no issue, sir, about the capacity, the jurisdiction, the mandate of a Speaker to sever a bill. Just as you, Speaker, spoke about the evolution of practice and the regret you had about it and how it has snowballed, I'm concerned about the successions of precedent which acknowledge the Speaker's right to sever but box it in so that the framework of that right to sever becomes minuscule. When you carry on with precedent that narrows it and narrows it, you maintain the Speaker's right to sever only as a theory but make it impossible to ever put in practice.

**1410**

Speaker, I respectfully submit, on behalf of the NDP caucus, that the amendments to acts under the Ministry of Labour, especially the Occupational Health and Safety Act as included in Bill 57, be exposed to the scrutiny of full debate both in this Legislature and in public hearings. To allow Bill 57 to move forward in its present form would be to allow the government to carry out what would be a hidden and sneak attack on working people by denying them the opportunity, through their representatives and in their own right at the committee level, to fully address changes that will have a profound impact on the safety of their workplaces.

I'm asking you to look at the totality of the bill. I submit to you it's critical that one reads the bill in its

totality. I'm asking you to consider the intent of the acknowledged power of a Speaker to sever and the interests of this Parliament as a body. I am asking you to take into account your observation of that evolution of omnibus bills becoming more omnibus, I suppose, in their nature, and I'm asking you to draw a line and to make it clear that you, sir, will protect the rights of individual members, as indicated by, among other things, standing order 1(b), and that you will exercise a power that you have to sever.

I ask for, I anticipate and have no doubt that there will be on your part a careful review of the bill, of the standing orders, of precedent and of our submissions. I ask you to take the time, Speaker, to carefully consider this point of order and I look forward with some enthusiasm and anxiousness to your response.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** The government House leader on the same point of order.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I certainly appreciate the honourable member's very lengthy dissertation, but I would like to respond to what he's saying because, first of all, this piece of legislation, the style of this bill, is neither unusual nor unprecedented and there is a theme of relevancy that runs through its content. Therefore it would be our submission, respectfully, that the bill is in order.

I turn to Beauchesne at page 192, where it states, "Although there is no specific set of rules or guidelines governing the content of a bill, there should be a theme of relevancy amongst the contents of a bill. They must be relevant to and subject to the umbrella which is raised by the terminology of the long title of the bill." The contents of this bill, Mr Speaker, we submit do meet these criteria: An Act to promote government efficiency and to improve services to taxpayers by amending or repealing certain Acts.

Omnibus bills—legislation that has different items but items that are very closely related—are not new to this House and have regularly been found to be procedurally acceptable where they've conformed to the theme of relevancy in their long titles, as laid out in Beauchesne, and rulings by Speakers of this Legislature and precedent in the federal House of Commons do support the practice of using one bill to demand a decision on a number of different although related subjects. That is certainly our submission.

The scope of the legislation is not as great in this particular bill as in other ones. For example, I would point to Bill 175 under the former NDP government, of which the member opposite was a member. Points of order raised when that bill was called for second reading expressed doubt about whether the contents of the bill demonstrated a theme of relevancy, and it was noted that the matters covered by that bill ranged from automating the land registry office to allowing alcoholic beverages to be sold in provincial parks. This was ruled acceptable.

The bill before us today certainly does have different items but they are related, we believe, under the title of this bill. So it would be our submission, respectfully, that the precedents are clear. The bill is in order and in this

case the umbrella, the long title, demonstrates the coherence among the bill's components. I would respectfully request that you rule this bill in order.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** The member for Niagara Centre has raised, I think, an extremely valid point of order. He quoted your own ruling in December 1999, which was a response to a similar point I had raised. My recollection of the various rulings of Speakers both in the federal House and here is that there has been an increasing tendency to be concerned about the nature of omnibus bills, the relevance of everything that is contained in them and the linkages between them. It's apparent to me, sir, and I know to many other members in this House, that increasingly bills have become, to use the member for Niagara Centre's words, more omnibus; that is, the scope and breadth of the legislation contained in them is less related, except in very loose fashion, than it had been in the past.

Accordingly, I believe it's up to Speakers today to look very closely at how this has evolved—indeed, going back to Speaker Jermone's rulings in the 1970s, when he expressed concerns, and your own concerns—in order to protect the privilege of members here in this House, the ability to debate items that are in their essence deserving of the attention of the House and ought not to be lumped in.

Accordingly, we in the official opposition support the point of order raised by the member for Niagara Centre. We look to you, sir, to take the rulings in this area, the whole area of omnibus legislation, which has changed dramatically, indeed in the short time I've been a member of this assembly, and we urge you to take us to the next step and protect our rights as members.

**The Speaker:** I thank the member for Niagara Centre for his submission, as well as the government House leader, as well as the House leader for the official opposition. I will reserve my judgment.

## VISITORS

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We often have a chance to honour those pages who serve here, but today I'd like to honour five who are prospective pages, who haven't been successful in their quest yet, from my riding who joined me for lunch today. They're in the east gallery: Alison Zimmerman, Jason Yeung, Christopher Henry, Ronald Matey and Danielle Inglis. Perhaps all members would join me in welcoming them.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to introduce to you and other members of this assembly some constituents of mine from Kingston and the Islands who have joined me here today to see the proceedings at question period at Queen's Park. They're sitting in the west gallery.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** That's not a point of order, but while we're introducing some special guests, today we have with us in the Speaker's gallery some

special guests. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association study group on public accounts committees, comprised of parliamentarians from Commonwealth countries, has been meeting here to study the role of the public accounts committees. Please join me in welcoming our special guests.

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors):** On a short point of order, Mr Speaker: I too would like to welcome several special guests to the members' gallery today. We are honoured to have representatives from the Canadian Snowbird Association, with over 70,000 members in Ontario. Bob Jackson, their president, is a former cabinet minister in the province of New Brunswick; Ellen White is the association's secretary and Ontario director; Mark Simone is policy adviser to the Canadian Snowbird Association; and Heather Nicolson-Morrison is here. They're in the gallery.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would just like to welcome anyone who has felt left out.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister of Labour, for that.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the fifth report of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 106(e), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My questions today are for the Minister of Finance. I want to speak to you further about your private school voucher program found in your budget. You have now provided Ontario's working families with a couple of assurances. First of all, you told us your private school voucher program will cost no more than \$300 million, and secondly, you have told us it will result in no loss of funding to public education.

Yesterday in the Legislature you said the following: "We don't have to rely on theory, on speculation, on might-have-beens.... We know the reality of it."

"For example, in Manitoba, independent school enrolment as a percentage of the total increased only marginally from 5% to 6.6% from 1999 to 2000.... That's what we anticipate happening in Ontario."

Minister, I shouldn't have to tell you that an increase from 5% to 6.6% in just one year is not marginal. In fact, it results in a 32% increase in enrolments. Your private school voucher program isn't going to cost \$300 million for the existing enrolment; it's also going to cost, according to your 32% projection, another \$115 million.

My question to you is, why have you hidden this additional \$115-million cost from Ontario's working families?

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** If the Leader of the Opposition had looked into the research correctly, he would have known that the figures with respect to the province of British Columbia and the province of Alberta are over 10 years, not one year.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, in my question, I made no—  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Would the member take his seat. Order.

The Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, in my question I made no reference to BC or Alberta. I made reference to the province you referred to yesterday. You talked about Manitoba. This was information that you provided to this Legislature just yesterday, and I'll repeat it for you. You said that independent school enrolment "in Manitoba, as a percentage of the total, increased only marginally from 5% to 6.6% from 1999 to 2000.... That's what we anticipate happening in Ontario."

As Minister of Finance, you will know that is not a marginal increase. We're talking about a 32% increase in just one year, based on information you have provided to this House. What that means is, we're not looking at a \$300-million cost; we're looking at an additional 33,000 students enrolling in private schools, at a cost of \$115 million.

Minister, why did you hide that information from this House and from Ontario's working families?

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** I see now how the Liberal government managed to tax and spend its way and increase the public deficit. Quite frankly, the member can't count. If he wants to know what the increase is over the period of 10 years—in the 10 years of Manitoba's program, independent school enrolment as a percentage of the total increased only marginally from 5% to 6.6% from 1990 to 2000. In other words, only one out of every 60 public school students moved to an independent school. Those are the Manitoba figures. If the Leader of the Opposition can't do the arithmetic over the six-year period from the commencement of our program next year through the five-year maturation, then I'll do the arithmetic for him, but I thought it was relatively easy to do that to get to the \$300-million figure.

**Mr McGuinty:** Then I guess, to this minister, what's another \$100 million? We happen to believe that's a lot of money. We happen to believe that money should be better spent in public education for smaller classes and lighthouse schools and turnaround teams. Those are the

kinds of investments we think we should be making in public education.

Mr Minister, why don't you just fess up now? Why don't you admit that you have done this on the back of an envelope? That's one of the reasons you have not been present here to take our questions. You have been unable to defend this policy. Why don't you tell us that you're making this up as you go? Tell us that you have no idea what this is going to cost Ontarians in terms of losses to public education and additional costs to private schools. Why not just admit that?

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** The estimate, of course, is based on the anticipated enrolment in Ontario over that period of time. We don't need theoretical studies. We have the realities of what has happened in the other five provinces in Canada that have already moved forward in this area. We know what the experience is in British Columbia and Alberta over a 10-year period.

So the cost will be approximately what I have said it would be over the maturation period. It may be a little bit less and it may be a little bit more, but we have that experience. We don't need the theoretical musings of the Leader of the Opposition. You can look at the reality of what has happened in British Columbia, the reality of what has happened in Manitoba. The Ontario figures are reliable based on actual Canadian experience.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr McGuinty:** My question is again for the Minister of Finance. Minister, what we want to know on behalf of Ontario's working families, and we feel we're entitled to this information and we have a reasonable expectation that you, sir, as Minister of Finance would have this information, is, can you tell us exactly how much your private school voucher program is going to cost?

Yesterday you told us it was going to result in a 32% increase. Now you're telling us, "No, that was really over a 10-year frame and not a one-year frame," and then just a moment ago you said, "Approximately \$300 million." We think we're entitled to know in a much more specific way how much your program is going to cost Ontario taxpayers. Can you tell us exactly now, based on your calculations, how much your private school voucher program is going to cost Ontario taxpayers? What does "approximately" mean?

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** I'll go over the same ground again to try to assist the Leader of the Opposition in understanding what's going on in Ontario. If the Leader of the Opposition looks at the budget bill, he will see that the proposal is a 10% tax credit for each year, starting in 2002, building up over the five years to 50%. Let me help him with respect to what has happened in Manitoba. This is not over five or six years, I say to the Leader of the Opposition—

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** Take your time and listen and then you'll be able to understand; at least I hope he'll be able to understand: 10 years is not five years. Ten years is twice as long as five years. That's true in British Columbia and it's true in Ontario. So take your time and

follow along: over the course of 10 years, not five years, independent school enrolment rose from 7.1% to 8.3%—over 10 years.

Based on the Ontario figures, that would be about \$300 million in terms of the tax credit. I hope that's clear. I hope the Leader of the Opposition wants to understand—

**The Speaker:** Supplementary.

**Mr McGuinty:** I will remind the Minister of Finance what his own ministry officials informed us of on budget day. They told us that your assessment of the \$300 million costs was based on zero growth. The question I now have for you, Minister of Finance, is, do you believe there will in fact be zero growth in enrolment in private schools after you have introduced your \$3,500 private school voucher incentive?

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** I again can't understand why the Leader of the Opposition has so much difficulty understanding a gradually brought in tax credit. It's not 50% next year, Leader of the Opposition; it's 10%. It's not 50% in year two; it's 20%. It's not 50% in year three; it's 30%. It's not 50% in year four; it's 40%. In year five, then it's 50%, which is still less, for example, than in Alberta, where the figure is 60%. When you do the arithmetic, the figure you get to, Leader of the Opposition, is \$300 million.

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**Mr McGuinty:** I remind the minister that his own officials told us that the cost of this program when fully implemented would be \$300 million on an annual basis, and they projected zero increase in enrolment in private schools. What I'm asking you, Minister of Finance, is whether you agree with that. Do you agree that your private school voucher incentive program will result in zero increase in private school enrolment? I need an answer.

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** Over time, as I've indicated, the figure would be about \$300 million. It depends, of course, on the number of students who transfer from one system to the other. Having said this, I say that if there is any significant transfer from the public school system, if we're talking about the accounts—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The Minister of Finance take his seat. Order.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** Did he forget to tell you—

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Windsor West, come to order, please, or we'll start with the warnings right off the bat. It's getting a little too loud in here. We can have our fun.

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** The tax credit costs will be approximately \$300 million over that period of time, and we stand by that figure.

I do ask the Leader of the Opposition why, in his latest pamphlet about our school system, he mentions a whole number of items but fails to mention his promise to repeal the tax credit for independent schools. I wonder if

he's serious about the statement he's made publicly and, if so, why isn't it here?

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Your decision to hold public hearings on your private school tax credit scheme in the greater Toronto area only is simply discrimination against people across Ontario. The greater Toronto area does not define the rest of Ontario.

An author, Jules Verne, travelled around the world in 80 days and wrote a book about it. The people of Ontario want public hearings across Ontario over 80 days. The question is, will you stop discriminating against everyone else in Ontario and hold real public hearings into your private school tax credit scheme so that people can have a say?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I appreciate the New Democratic Party's concern and interest in making sure the public is heard. I share that concern. I know the Liberals have never asked me about it, so I guess they don't or perhaps, like when we had the hearings in Sault Ste Marie, they asked for them and never showed up. Maybe they don't like travelling the province; I don't know.

So I do appreciate the New Democratic Party's—  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The Premier take his seat. It's getting too loud in here again. I can't hear. If you're going to keep it up, we're going to start to warn people and name people. Sorry, Premier, for the interruption.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I do appreciate the New Democratic Party's interest in making sure the public is heard. We too share that concern. There are lots of vehicles, lots of opportunities. I think House leaders undoubtedly will be discussing this on Thursdays. Committee members themselves, once we've finished second reading and the bill's referred out, will have an opportunity to discuss ways they can make sure the whole province is consulted.

**Mr Hampton:** The question is very simple: are you prepared to hold public hearings across the province or not? If you're not, it is clearly discriminatory.

But that doesn't end this discrimination. I want to take you back to something you said yesterday. You said there would be no discrimination by private schools in the use of public money. You said the Human Rights Code would not permit that. Well, Premier, you should read section 18 of the Human Rights Code because private schools are exempt. It means they can and they do discriminate, and it is permitted. Premier, before you use public dollars to fund private schools that can discriminate, don't you think the people of Ontario deserve real public hearings across Ontario?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I think the member might want to be a little cautious in talking about discrimination. There is discrimination, like the discriminating buyer, that's a positive discrimination. I don't know whether the member is opposed to the Catholic schools' right to discriminate, as it is given a partial exemption under the Human Rights Code to conform with the Constitution of Canada.

They can in fact, as you know, discriminate, and that form of discrimination is deemed to be acceptable by the Constitution of Canada, the courts of Canada and the Human Rights Commission. But it is clear that no institution, that no group or individual within the province of Ontario, can promote or incite hatred or violence against any identifiable group or person. The Ontario government does not and will not tolerate that promotion of hatred in any form.

We stated in the budget that there are a number of policy issues concerning implementation, and we welcome the member's input into implementation of this tax credit for working families, whom it's designed to support. We welcome that kind of input.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, this is what section 18 says: "Special interest organizations," and it allows them to engage in discrimination. We finally got you to admit that. My point is, before you use public money to fund discrimination by private schools, don't you think the people across Ontario deserve a hearing on this? When public money was extended to separate schools, your members demanded 80 days of public hearings across Ontario. You said it was absolutely necessary. You said it had to happen before public money could be used in this way. Well, Premier, it's the same occasion. We're asking for 80 days of public hearings across Ontario before you extend discrimination by private schools using public money. What's your answer, Premier? It was a good answer then; let's have the same answer now.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I appreciate knowing the NDP's position, and it's very important. This will be something that will be sorted out by the House leaders and by those committee members, to make sure there is an appropriate opportunity to hear the legitimate views of Ontarians.

I'm not sure I would compare the two. I can tell you, if you want to get into comparisons, that in the 36th session of Parliament, 43% of government bills were sent to committee. In this session, currently 53% of government bills have been sent to committee. Under the NDP only 38% of government bills went to committee, and under the Liberals 19% of government bills went to committee. So I say to you that we take absolutely no backseat on public consultation, to sending government bills out for hearings. In fact our record is far more exemplary than that of your party or the Liberal Party.

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**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Hampton:** To the Premier: We met with Ministry of Finance officials yesterday and we asked them about all the standards that apply to our public schools: standards regarding the Safe Schools Act, teacher testing, teacher credentials etc. We said to them, "Before you extend public funding to private schools, are you going to ensure these same standards are met?" They said, "No. This isn't educational policy. This is simply a tax credit for private schools. They can go on and continue to do whatever they do."

Premier, before you extend public money to private schools, when your own officials say there are no guide-

lines, don't you think you should do the same thing you demanded in 1985: public hearings—real public hearings—for people across this province so they can examine what you're doing, can understand what you're doing and can have a say? It was fair then, Premier. Why isn't it fair now?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I think we made it very clear yesterday. We think that's a good idea.

**Mr Hampton:** If the Premier thinks this is a good idea, then stand on your feet and commit that there will be real public hearings, not by electronic media, not by video camera, but real public hearings across this province, that you'll go to Timmins, to Sault Ste Marie, to Sudbury, to Ottawa, to Kingston, to Peterborough, to Windsor, to Sarnia, to Thunder Bay, that you'll go across this province and you'll hold real public hearings. That's the issue. I'll tell you there is rally after rally being held across this province by people who understand what you're doing, but who also understand you won't hold public hearings. We're having a rally here tonight at Queen's Park.

**Interjection:** Tomorrow night.

**Mr Hampton:** If you're not prepared to come to that rally tomorrow night, if you're not prepared to defend your policy, then guarantee public hearings—real public hearings—across the province and do it now.

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let me simply, by way of responding to the final supplementary, congratulate the New Democratic Party on finding an issue they can get their teeth into, on standing up for public hearings, which we've already committed to doing. That's something the Liberal Party doesn't seem to care too much about. Let me also say that I appreciate knowing there's going to be a rally tonight and I assume that the leader of the New Democratic Party will be at that rally. I think it's important the media know that. I hope I get a good accounting. Maybe somebody can attend and let me know what you say and how it goes. I think these rallies are an important part of public democracy, and I'm excited that you're getting involved and are enthusiastic and excited about the parliamentary process as we've laid this agenda before the people.

## CANCER TREATMENT

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** My question is for the Premier. Your government set up Cancer Care Ontario just four years ago to coordinate cancer care across the province and to set standards of treatment for cancer patients. Over the past four years, Cancer Care Ontario has been an advocate for higher standards of cancer care. They've told us all clearly what needs to be done. They've told us of unacceptably long waiting lists for radiation treatments. They've told us we don't have enough cancer doctors. They've told us we're facing a crisis in chemotherapy treatment. They've told us we need to put more money into prevention. They've provided the coordination and they have shown you, the government, where the gaps are. Cancer Care Ontario has been doing exactly what it was set up to do.

Now, Premier, you have decided that you don't want coordination, that you don't want advocacy, that you want to go back to the piecemeal situation we had before. Will you tell us today why you have decided to end the independence of cancer care centres across this province?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I think the Minister of Health can respond to that.

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I can say to the honourable member that nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, we are working with Cancer Care Ontario and its board, as she may be aware. She probably has read the news release of the Cancer Care Ontario board of directors today indicating they are perfectly with us when it comes to integrating cancer care services to better service the cancer patients in Ontario. This was an original goal of the Health Services Restructuring Commission that they signed on to from the very beginning. This has nothing to do with cancer care funding, which will continue to increase. It has nothing to do with not having a unique envelope for cancer care in our province. It has to do with delivering better cancer services to the people of Ontario.

**Mrs McLeod:** Your government gave them marching orders. Your government called last week and informed Cancer Care Ontario that you were going to accelerate the integration of cancer centres with hospitals. Minister, I remind you that hospitals in this province are facing \$750 million in deficits. How do you expect hospitals to take on the responsibility of dealing with the waiting lists for cancer care? I can suggest to you that you're not going to solve the problem of the lack of cancer surgery in hospitals, if that's your goal, by making cancer patients compete with heart patients for hospital dollars.

I wonder what's going to happen to cancer patients when they can't get treatment in a reasonable amount of time because you no longer have a coordinated cancer treatment system. No one likes the idea of referring people away from home for care, but you can't get rid of the problem by burying it. You may not want to count the number of cancer patients on a waiting list for treatment, but the cancer patients don't go away.

Minister, Cancer Care Ontario is asking you exactly these same questions. They want you to appoint an independent panel, not one that marches to the directions of your Premier's office, and they want that independent panel to answer questions about how standards can be maintained, how coordination can be maintained. Will you commit to establishing that independent panel to look at the future of Cancer Care Ontario and the care of cancer patients today?

**Hon Mr Clement:** I indicated to you that the board has indicated to us and to the public of Ontario that they want to work with us for a long-standing goal. I don't know why you're talking about rushing around. This goal has been around for four years, and they have agreed with us that this goal is worthy of moving on at this point in time.

Then you talk about the cancer care budget. You fail to mention how it has increased year after year, by over

40% over the last four or five years. You didn't mention that in your question, but that's the reality of the situation. Nothing in this will cut any budget of cancer care for the people of Ontario, nothing in this somehow integrates the budget with other hospital requirements or spending. We are protecting the budget, we are protecting cancer care in this province and we are doing it so that it is integrated with the other hospital functions to deliver better cancer services. To suggest anything else would be fearmongering.

#### AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. As you know, my riding of Cambridge is home to one of the most advanced automobile manufacturing facilities in the world. The Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada plant is home to the Toyota Corolla, Toyota Solara and the Solara convertible models and recently was again awarded J.D. Power recognition for quality.

In recent months there has been speculation that the production of a new Lexus model would be announced for this plant. I understand that this announcement was made on Friday. This would be the first time a Lexus automobile would be built outside Japan.

Minister, could you share with the House what this announcement included and what it will mean for my community of Cambridge?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** Toyota has been, I think it's fair to say, dropping hints for some time now that the new Lexus SUV model would soon be announced for the Cambridge plant. As the member indicated, last Friday they confirmed that the company will spend more than \$200 million over the next two years to create a new paint shop for this facility. The paint shop is part of a \$650-million effort to prepare for the production of the high-end Lexus RX300 sport utility vehicle, which will begin rolling off the assembly line in 2003. This investment will create up to 800 construction jobs at peak times and another 300 permanent jobs once construction is complete.

**Mr Martiniuk:** This is more good news for the riding of Cambridge and is contrary to a lot of the pessimistic talk coming out of the automobile industry in the past few months.

Though this is great news for my riding, I would ask what it means for the rest of the province and what our government is doing to ensure that more investments of this kind come our way.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** The Cambridge Toyota facility is recognized as one of the best in the world. This plant is the first one outside Japan to assemble any of the luxury Lexus models, and Cambridge won the contract because of its outstanding record for quality.

A high-quality workforce and top-of-the-line facilities are what we expect here in Ontario. Our government has committed over \$16 million through its strategic skills

investment program to train young people in the design, testing and production of automobiles—

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Runciman:** The members from Windsor, I would think, should be interested in this, the Liberal members who seem to be heckling at a question dealing with the auto sector, which should have prime importance to them.

**Interjection:** Shame, shame.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** Very much shame.

Maintaining these high standards and reducing the cost of doing business help to create an environment that will help companies interested in investing in our province.

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## AUTOPSIES

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** My question is to the Solicitor General. Minister, you will know that since mid-April your government has been transporting bodies for medical-legal autopsies from several points in Ontario, such as Sudbury, Thunder Bay and North Bay, to mention only a few, to Toronto because your government refused to honour an agreement reached between the chief coroner, who negotiated on your behalf, and the Ontario Association of Pathologists.

By renegeing on this agreement, your government has forced a situation whereby bodies must wait in a home community for a number of days, then are sent to Toronto for an autopsy and finally are returned home for interment. This process is causing undue hardships on bereaved families who have just lost loved ones, people like Nicole Pilotte, whose son drowned on May 19. His body had to be sent to Toronto and didn't return until May 22. In Nicole's words, "Our son was not recognizable." When will you settle your dispute with the pathologists for the sake of grieving families?

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** The honourable member raises a tremendously important issue, one which obviously we're dealing with, but the premise of the question is incorrect. You suggest that in fact there was an agreement made. There was no such agreement; there were some discussions. Progress, I'm pleased to say, has been made on this issue but it isn't completely solved yet. We're monitoring the situation, and discussions are continuing between the Office of the Chief Coroner and the Ontario Association of Pathologists. In the meantime, you are correct: alternative arrangements have been made to handle this very serious issue.

**Mr Bartolucci:** An agreement had been reached between the two bodies and it was nixed at Management Board and then cabinet. Clearly, Minister, aside from the human perspective, aside from demonstrating a morbid indifference to families, you must recognize the financial implications of this policy. The cost of shipping bodies across Ontario is far higher than the reasonable fees requested by pathologists and rejected by your government. In my community alone, up until this past Monday,

the Sudbury regional police had to accompany every body to Toronto. The fiscal and human resource costs associated with this cannot be understated. Unlike the northern health travel grant, which only pays 34 cents a kilometre one way, it is costing your government \$1.35 per kilometre for mileage to ship bodies to and from Toronto.

Minister, will you finally honour all of your government's commitments which were part of the original agreement? Will you agree to respond to the pathologists' concerns over outdated equipment and facilities? Will you agree to go ahead with the regional forensic centre in northeastern Ontario and, above all, will you agree to stop putting grieving families through hell by making them endure needless delays?

**Hon Mr Turnbull:** First of all, let me say to the honourable member that clearly it's a very sad situation and one where my heart goes out to those grieving families.

However, having said that, I want to be very clear with the honourable member that there was no such agreement. You are inaccurate in your statement. Furthermore, we have made a very generous offer, which is in the process of being negotiated at this moment, and we are very determined to solve the situation.

But I do not believe our government will ever return to the old Liberal way of tax and spend. We live within our budget. That's the difference between you and me.

## INVESTIGATION INTO CHILD ABUSE

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean):** My question is for the Attorney General. Mr Minister, Klancy Grasman of the Ontario Provincial Police has announced the end of Project Truth on four different occasions. The first was in February of 1999 and the last in December of last year. At the moment of the last announcement, Project Truth's office in Cornwall was closed and it was moved to the Long Sault detachment of the OPP.

Mr Grasman, whom I've never met—I really don't know whether he's a civilian or an officer—is the individual who was quoted in the press release on Christmas Eve 1994, saying, "We have left no stone unturned." More important to this government, I suggest, he is the individual who was quoted in the press release and the announcement of the Walkerton criminal investigation when he said, "We shall leave no stone unturned." But, Mr Minister, I contacted your office or the office of your predecessor of happy memory in January of this year and also the Solicitor General's office to inquire as to whether or not this was a closed investigation and whether the matter was coming to a close, and I was assured that it was and that there were no other charges being contemplated. Imagine my surprise yesterday when the Solicitor General told me it wasn't a closed book and that we were contemplating charges, pending the legal opinion from your office.

Sir, an estimate, if you would, please, of how much longer we should wait—reasonably wait—before the final answer comes forward.

**Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** Let me say at the outset that I do understand how difficult the past few years have been for the people of Cornwall. I'm appreciative of the fact that these questions, these matters, are of great concern. They should be of great concern and they are to me, and they're being taken very seriously.

We have a responsibility to do everything we can to protect society's most vulnerable members from sexual exploitation. As the member knows, as Attorney General I cannot and I will not comment on any specific case. When the police are satisfied that they have reasonable and probable grounds, they lay charges. The Attorney General does not; crown attorneys do not. There are matters that are currently before the court, both civil and criminal matters. In addition, the police and the crowns continue to review various additional and related matters. It would be inappropriate for me to comment at this time on whether or not there will be any further charges laid. For an Attorney General to do so, I say with respect to my friend, would be tantamount to interfering with the court process and may well be viewed as a violation of the charter.

**Mr Guzzo:** I accept that answer and I agree with it totally, but I'm not asking you to interfere; I'm just asking you to give me an estimate of the amount of time your people will require to give the legal opinions that the OPP apparently are waiting for. Is it a matter of weeks? I tell you, I asked the question, at the time of my last bill, of your predecessor, Attorney General Flaherty, as he then was. He suggested at that time that it would be a matter of weeks, in his opinion.

Let me also just make it very clear: I find the fact that we learn now that these matters—we are still dealing with an open door, and they are waiting for additional opinions. I find that a very positive sign and I want to underline that, but I have to tell you, sir, that the people of Cornwall are becoming frustrated. They're losing confidence in the justice system and they're losing confidence in this government.

All I'm asking for, and I'll repeat it: I want an estimate of the time. How much time would you reasonably expect? Is it a matter of weeks? Is it a matter of months, sir? Never mind interfering or suggesting any interference with the investigation of the police. How much more time for your lawyers to give them the advice they've requested?

**Hon Mr Young:** Let me repeat at the outset that Attorneys General don't lay criminal charges, crown attorneys don't lay criminal charges; the police do so when they are satisfied that they have reasonable and probable grounds to support a criminal charge.

I appreciate that my friend doesn't have the same encumbrances that I do as Attorney General. However, I am not in a position to offer my personal opinion or my guesstimate as to how long it should take or will take for a particular charge to be considered or for evidence or information to be considered. I say to you that it is my opinion that for me to do that at this time would be in-

appropriate, that it may jeopardize a fair trial for those who may be charged, if anyone is charged. My interest is that no guilty person go free because of something that is said in this Legislature. By the same token, I certainly don't want to interfere with an innocent person's right to a fair trial. So I say to you, I cannot and I will not comment further on this matter at this time.

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#### COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York):** My question is to the Minister of Health. In response to my question yesterday, you said you were still in communication with community care access centres about additional funding to their base allocations. I've been in contact with CCACs in Sault Ste Marie, East York, Hamilton, Niagara, Scarborough, Ottawa, Kingston and Kitchener, and their story is very different from yours.

Sault Ste Marie is facing a projected deficit of \$3.2 million. Ottawa-Carleton needs an additional \$10 million just to maintain the same services they provided last year. East York is being cut by \$2 million. Kitchener-Waterloo has been ordered to reduce expenditures by \$4 million. Kingston is running short by \$3.3 million. Hamilton-Wentworth, Niagara and many others are going to have to cut in order to do away with projected deficits to maintain existing service levels.

CCACs tell me they've been told there is no additional funding coming, only their base allocations, no more discussion. Yesterday, you said you're still having discussions about adding money to their base allocations. Minister, which of those two statements is accurate?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Let me reiterate the history of CCACs since 1996. Of course, the honourable member will be aware that base funding has increased by over 70%, so there has been a history of funding to the demands of the CCACs in our communities.

I would say to the honourable member that we're in the process of discussion. Of course the CCACs have put forward their proposed budgets, which quite frankly are part of our discussion. We have an obligation, on behalf of the taxpayers and on behalf of the citizenry, not only to meet the demands that should be met by the CCACs but also to ensure that those budget allocations and projections are done in a cost-effective, meaningful way and that there is no waste and no duplication. We're going through that process right now, and the process is ongoing.

**Ms Lankin:** Minister, what you just told me is that the CCACs still have an opportunity to get additional money to their base funding. They have not been told that by their regional managers. They have been told, "Bottom line: no more money." On that basis, and planning to do away with the deficit, they have had to start sending out notices of service reductions. Minister, some of those service reductions begin this coming Monday, June 4. In all the different CCACs there are deadlines for notices

going out and the various levels of service reductions—home care, nursing, personal care. Minister, it includes cuts to things like IVs, chemo and antibiotics. Do you know where those patients will end up? They'll end up continuing their stays in hospital. They won't be discharged to the home. You've got hospitals that are facing a \$700-million deficit. You're going to cause more people to stay longer in the hospital because the CCACs are cutting their budgets.

Minister, in order to get rid of their deficits, those cuts have to start Monday. You're saying you're still discussing. When will you report to this House what the actual budget allocations for CCACs, one by one across the province, will be?

**Hon Mr Clement:** I know it's not the honourable member's intention to jump to conclusions, but she is repeating the fallacy of yesterday, which was that the choice before CCACs is to either get more money or cut services. We believe in a third way. Our way is to work with the providers to see whether there is any waste, any duplication, any overservice in some area that doesn't need it, to pay for underservices in other areas. Those are the choices we make as a government, rather than automatically writing a cheque or automatically cutting services. When they were in power, maybe they had a different point of view. But our point of view is: work with us, make sure we see all the facts. If we have a particular problem with a particular CCAC that she knows about, tell us the problem. I challenge them: have a value-for-money audit and we'll live by the results too.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** My question is for the Minister of Labour, and I don't see him around. He was here a few minutes ago.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Stop the clock for a moment. The Minister of Labour is here; we'll just wait for him. The member may continue.

**Mr Lalonde:** Minister, you often talk about fairness and that fairness is a two-way street, as spelled out in Bill 17. Today, the city of Ottawa, as well as the electricians and plumbers of Ontario, don't think you are fair. When the city of Ottawa didn't move fast enough for you and your Quebec counterparts, you had your Minister of Municipal Affairs on May 7 amend the Municipal Act for Ottawa only. That amendment removes the power of the city of Ottawa to regulate master licence certification. This now allows anyone from Quebec with an RBQ licence to obtain a master licence to work in Ottawa without having to try an exam.

Are you aware that many Quebecers who hold RBQ licences have written no exam at all, not even in Quebec, and are certainly not familiar with the Ontario building and electrical codes? Ottawa councillors are not nuts, and you are not being fair to Ontario electricians and plumbers who still have to write exams to obtain a master licence to work in Ottawa.

So I ask: will you direct the Minister of Municipal Affairs to once again amend the Municipal Act to level

the playing field for all Ontario electricians and plumbers working in Ottawa, or are you once again going to cave in to Quebec's demands, which could have an impact on the health and safety of Ottawa people?

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I appreciate the question from the member opposite. Let's be clear about the exam process: we met with the mechanical association and the electrical association with respect to the exam. We were given an undertaking from both those associations that said the exams are fundamentally the same. An Ontario contractor who goes into Quebec has not been forced to rewrite the exam in Quebec since 1996. By the reciprocal agreement under Fairness is a Two-Way Street, we simply removed that barrier in Ontario because Quebec removed the barrier in 1996. That was a fair ruling. That's the kind of ruling we made.

For you to stand in this place and suggest this government didn't do anything to represent the workers in Ottawa, and your government somehow did, is beyond the pale of reasonableness. This government introduced Bill 17, the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act. We got Ontario workers into Quebec to work. You did nothing to facilitate those workers. To stand here and criticize us on that is absolutely, patently absurd.

**The Speaker:** Supplementary?

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I want to follow up on a question about health and safety and a change this minister, this government, is sort of trying to sneak through under Bill 57. As it now stands, if a worker believes the workplace is unsafe, they can refuse to work. They can call the ministry, and an inspector will visit the work site in their presence to determine whether there's a safe working condition.

Under Bill 57, this government is now trying to sneak in a change where, if a complaint is laid, an inspector can simply assess whether there is a safe or unsafe workplace over the phone.

**The Speaker:** You know that the supplementary has to be related. Could you come to the point about it? It's almost the end of question anyway.

**Mr Agostino:** Speaker, both questions are related to health and safety and to a continuous attack on working women and men by this government.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Agostino:** The members across the floor may think it's humorous when you expose people to unsafe working conditions. They may think it's humorous when men and women get injured on the job. We don't believe that to be the case on this side of the House. When the members and the minister can stop laughing and realize that this jeopardizes the health and safety of people across—

1510

**The Speaker:** Order. The member has 10 seconds to ask the question. I'll be up in 10 seconds and he won't even get it out.

**Mr Agostino:** Can the minister answer why he has changed the legislation under Bill 57 and now requires an

inspector to assess by phone rather than in person why or why not a workplace is unsafe, and will you take responsibility the first time a person is killed or injured on the job—

**The Speaker:** The member's time is up. Minister.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** OK, if that's the supplementary to the original question. First off, let's be clear. We weren't laughing at the issue at all. We were laughing, quite candidly, at the questioner, but we weren't laughing at the issue of health and safety.

What we are saying on the issue of Bill 57 is simply this: the inspector makes a decision. Some of those inspections and stop-works in health and safety can sometimes take a day or two of travel for the inspector to get to the workplace in order to inspect the site. When it's a very straightforward issue, on consent by the inspector, who works for the government, he or she may say, "I was there very recently. I know exactly what you're talking about. I can take the request on the phone and I can deal with the health and safety concern." But only the inspector may be allowed to do that. Only the inspector may determine whether or not that's the appropriate approach. If they decide it's not, they'll say, "Stop work. I'm going to have to head up there. It may take a day or two and you can't operate."

So let's be clear. No government is saying they won't inspect. Of course they will. But in certain circumstances, in certain situations, the inspector makes a decision whether or not they need to actually visit the site. That's a reasonable way to do business. That's a reasonable approach to take and it's only a common sense approach that we understand—

**The Speaker:** New question.

#### ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS AND TRADES

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Ontario is home to more than half of all immigrants who choose to come to Canada. Some 72% of working-age immigrants arrive here with at least some post-secondary educational training and many of them choose to settle in my riding of Scarborough Centre. Many of them are unable to practise because the education and experience they earned abroad may not correspond with the standards and requirements we have here in Ontario. This is happening at a time when several employers are concerned about the supply of available, skilled labour. I'm wondering, Minister, what steps you are taking to help foreign-trained professionals enter the workforce and contribute to Ontario's economy.

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** I thank my colleague from Scarborough Centre. I would just like to say that for too long many foreign-trained specialists have found themselves in this great province with the qualifications and we haven't moved them quickly into jobs. So in the budget

of 2001 we will provide an additional \$12 million in new spending to help foreign-trained professionals put their skills to work in Ontario. The funds will support new bridging programs—we already have some—that build on the previous experience of immigrants and focus on preparing them to write the exams to qualify, to take courses in areas where they may have some gaps and to get these great jobs. This will build on the \$3.5 million we announced last year, where we supported bridging programs for foreign-trained pharmacists and nurses.

Dr Joseph Wong of the Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care, the nurses at his centre, in co-operation with the St Michael's Hospital care project, are really moving to make this happen.

**Ms Mushinski:** Thank you for that response, Minister, but as you know, skills shortages have a very negative effect on our province's economy and threaten our economic competitiveness. After several years of exceptional economic growth and job creation, several sectors are concerned that they will have trouble maintaining their rate of growth without access to more skilled and educated workers. While all foreign-trained professionals who meet Ontario's standards should be able to practise, this seems to be a particularly acute problem in high-demand fields. Minister, would you not agree that we should be paying special attention to these areas where our province is facing skills shortages, and will these funds be targeted to address these specific needs?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** My answer is, absolutely. The supply of our skilled and knowledgeable workers is important to our economy. The importance of our foreign-trained citizens here in Ontario is extremely important to us and we will target these funds to where we have the greatest needs. The \$12 million will support the bridging programs that have already started, some of which I've been able to describe. They will do health care, which is nursing and pharmacists, information technologies, engineering, wherever we can target these shortages and have the bridge programs that will support them.

I know the members in this House are appreciative of the academic credentials assessment service, which is up and going and helping all immigrants find the qualifications they need. Our ministry's access to professions and trades unit is focusing on promoting these fair registration practices to get it done faster with speedy access into the markets.

#### COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** My question is to the Minister of Health. I'd like to get back to the critical funding issues related to community care access centres. You know, Minister, that many frail and elderly people and people who need care are not getting it right now or are going to be denied care because of your directives and new regulations that have come out.

As you've heard earlier, in Kingston \$3.3 million has to be cut from the budget. As the chair of the board says,

"This will be extremely difficult in the face of the community's growing needs and increasing costs of services." Their budget has not been substantially increased in the last five years. The problem is compounded by the fact that Kingston General Hospital is a tertiary care institution, and therefore people are being released much sicker and needing much more care. People who used to stay in the hospital to recuperate now basically have to go home to do the same.

What I'm asking you is quite simple. When you closed your hospitals, Duncan Sinclair, the chair of the restructuring commission, was quite adamant that before you closed hospitals, before you closed beds, there should be enough community care funding in place so that the people in effect could be taken care of in their own homes. That's not happening. What are you doing about it? When are you going to tell the community care access centres that their funding will be restored so they can—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The member's time is up. Minister of Health.

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to correct the record of the opposition member because, indeed, long-term community care services have increased by 58% in the last few years in this government. When you look at all of the long-term-care financing, that's increased by 73%. In 2001-02, the budget year he is so concerned about, we are spending approximately \$1.6 billion on long-term-care community services, a majority of it going to CCACs. Since 1998-99, since he is so concerned about facts and figures, we've announced \$550 million of multi-year expansion in this area. That is our record, a record of which we are proud.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Minister, people want to stay in their own homes longer. It is more cost-efficient; it is much less costly than if they were in long-term institutions. The community care access centre in Frontenac-Lennox and Addington has been forced to distribute questionnaires asking people how they want to see the services cut in order to meet your demand to cut \$3.3 million from their services.

Nancy Sears, the CEO, states, "The planning parameters changed suddenly and recently." As a matter of fact, your ministry official said, "Tell us what would happen if you only have \$25 million." That is no way to look after the health care needs of the people out there. If we want to release them from hospitals quicker, then why don't you live up to the commitment you gave to Duncan Sinclair to fund community care access centres so that people would have the necessary community health care services available because they could no longer stay in hospital? Why don't you live up to your commitment?

1520

**Hon Mr Clement:** I say to the honourable member, you show me where Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington have not participated in the 73% increase in community care access centre money; then I'd be on your side. You show me where they have not had an increase

in home care, not had an increase in utilization, not had an increase in the provincial budget with respect to this issue; then I'd be on your side.

The fact is that they have participated. The fact is that they are part of our expenditure increases in this area. If they still have a problem with utilization—if they still have a problem—I'd like to get a value-for-money audit, he and I can take it out together and then we'll see whether they are utilizing properly, whether they're delivering the services properly, and we'll all learn together.

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: My privileges as a member have been abridged. Yesterday, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities went to the Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care in Scarborough—

**The Speaker:** If it's a point of privilege, we do need to have some notice of that in writing unless it arose from today. If you're referring to yesterday, I would ask the member to put it in writing and give us notice and then we will take a look at it. I thank the member for Davenport for that.

## PETITIONS

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the citizens of Victoria county had no direct say in the creation of the new city of Kawartha Lakes;

"Whereas the government by regulation and legislation forced the recent amalgamation, against the wishes of the obvious majority of the people;

"Whereas the government has not delivered the promised streamlined, more efficient and accountable local government, nor the provision of better services at reduced costs; and

"Whereas the promises of tax decreases have not been met, based on the current assessment;

"Whereas the expected transition costs to area taxpayers of this forced amalgamation have already exceeded the promised amount by three times;

"It is resolved that the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately rescind the forced amalgamation order and return the local municipal government back to the local citizens and their democratically elected officials of Victoria county and remove the bureaucratic, dictatorial, single-tier governance it has coerced on all local residents."

I will also sign the petition.

### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** I've got hundreds of concerned citizens who want to stop the tax

credit because it's hurting public education. Here's what they say:

"Whereas the Harris government is planning to take funds that our public schools desperately need and funnel them to private schools through tax credits; and

"Whereas the government's plan is to give parents a \$3,500 entitlement to pull their kids out of public schools; and

"Whereas this initiative is in effect a voucher system and is the beginning of the end of quality public education in Ontario,

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, call on all members of the Legislature to fight and defeat this attack on the choice parents most want: stability, co-operation and respect in clean, safe public schools."

I attach my signature in support.

#### DIABETES TREATMENT

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton):** I'm very pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's signed by over 300 people and it reads as follows:

"We are suggesting that all diabetic supplies as prescribed by an endocrinologist or medical doctor be covered under the Ontario health insurance plan;

"Diabetes costs Canadian taxpayers a bundle. It is the leading cause of hospitalization in Canada. Some people with diabetes simply cannot afford the ongoing expense of managing diabetes. They cut corners to save money. They rip test strips in half, cut down on the number of times they test their blood and even reuse lancets and needles. These budget-saving measures can often have disastrous health care consequences;

"Persons with diabetes need and deserve financial assistance to cope with the escalating cost of managing diabetes. We think it is in all Ontarians' and the government's best interest to support diabetics with the supplies that each individual needs to obtain the best glucose control possible. As you all know, good control reduces or eliminates kidney failure by 50%, blindness by 76%, nerve damage by 60%, cardiac disease by 35% and even amputations. Just think of how many dollars can be saved by the Ministry of Health if diabetics had a chance to gain optimum glucose control."

I sign my signature.

#### DOCTOR SHORTAGE

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** Forty thousand people in the city of Thunder Bay and the Thunder Bay district signed a letter to the Premier, a petition related to the shortage of doctors and specialists in our community. I'd like to read that to the Legislature.

"Dear Premier:

"Our community is facing an immediate, critical situation in accessing physician services and in providing hospital care to the people of northwestern Ontario.

While the recruitment and retention of physicians has been a concern for many years, it is now reaching crisis proportions. Training more physicians in northern Ontario is certainly the best response to this problem in the longer term. We are, however, in urgent need of support for immediate short-term solutions that will allow our community both to retain our current physicians and recruit new family doctors and specialists in seriously understaffed areas.

"Therefore, as residents of Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario, we urge you to respond to our community's and our region's critical and immediate needs. For us, this is truly a matter of life and death."

As I said, 40,000 people signed these petitions. I am pleased to add my name and to present them in the Legislature today.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** This is a petition by tenants asking for a province-wide freeze on rents.

"Whereas the annual rent increase guideline for multi-unit residential dwellings in Ontario increases every year more than the rate of inflation and more than the cost-of-living increases for most tenants;

"Whereas no new affordable rental housing is being built by the private sector, despite the premise that the implementation of vacancy decontrol in June of 1998 would encourage new construction;

"Whereas one in four tenants pays over 50% of their income on rent, over 100,000 people are on the waiting list for social housing, and homelessness has increased as a result of unaffordable rents;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement an immediate province-wide freeze on rents which will stop all guideline increases, above-guideline increases and increases to maximum rent for all sitting tenants in Ontario for a period of at least two years."

I support this petition with my signature.

#### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):** I have a petition which reads as follows:

"Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

"Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion, is best for their children; and

"Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as those practised by the Montessori and Waldorf schools are best for their children; and

"Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

"Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

"Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent schools as soon as possible."

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the northern health travel grant was introduced in 1987 in recognition of the fact that northern Ontario residents are often forced to receive treatment outside their own communities because of the lack of available services; and

"Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged that costs associated with that travel should not be fully borne by those residents and, therefore, that financial support should be provided by the Ontario government through the travel grant program; and

"Whereas travel, accommodation and other costs have escalated sharply since the program was first put in place, particularly in the area of air travel; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre and in Sudbury have all their expenses paid while receiving treatment in the north, which creates a double standard for health care delivery in the province; and

"Whereas northern Ontario residents should not receive a different level of health care nor be discriminated against because of their geographical location;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness and inadequacy of the northern health travel grant program and commit to a review of the program with a goal of providing 100% funding of the travel costs for residents needing care outside their communities until such time as that care is available in their communities."

I'm proud to sign this petition on behalf of the hundreds, if not thousands, of constituents who have signed similar petitions.

1530

#### EDUCATION

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** This petition comes mostly from people from Sarnia who are against education funding cuts.

"Whereas Mike Harris and the Ministry of Education, with their new curriculum changes and cuts, have been failing our province's students;

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To cease cutting funds from the education system, and put back what was taken out to pay for textbooks for

all grades, music, arts and physical education programs, and to hire more teachers;

"To immediately begin preparing elementary students for the secondary school curriculum (as the current students were not);

"Prepare for the doubling number of students in 2003 by working with colleges and universities now (space, teachers, admissions, marks etc);

"Abolish recent in-class time hike for teachers, which doesn't allow proper time to prepare lessons or volunteer their time to extracurricular activities;

"Eliminate the teacher adviser group and the teacher adviser program;

"Simply, to listen to the students of Ontario and to stop ignoring them. After all, they are the ones these changes are affecting."

I support this petition.

#### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** I have a petition which reads as follows:

"Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

"Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion, is best for their children; and

"Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as those practised in the Montessori and Waldorf schools are best for their children; and

"Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

"Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public system through their tax dollars; and

"Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent schools as soon as possible and ensure that the Ontario curriculum is followed religiously."

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will create two-tier education;

"Whereas the government plans to give parents a \$3,500 enticement to pull their kids out of public schools;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will encourage the growth of a segregated society;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will steal money from an already cash-starved public system;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools effectively create a voucher system in Ontario;

"Whereas the Harris government has no mandate to introduce such a measure;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We call on the government of Ontario to withdraw its plan for two-tiered education and properly fund public education in Ontario."

### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments; and

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors, and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

I am pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

### NURSES

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the nurses of Ontario are seeking relief from heavy workloads, which have contributed to unsafe conditions for patients and have increased the risk of injury to nurses; and

"Whereas there is a chronic nursing shortage in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has failed to live up to its commitment to provide safe, high quality care for patients;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Ontario government take positive action to ensure that our communities have enough nursing staff to provide patients with the care they need. The Ontario government must:

"Ensure wages and benefits are competitive and value all nurses for their dedication and commitment; ensure there are full-time and regular part-time jobs available for nurses in hospitals, nursing homes and the community; ensure government revenues fund health care, not tax cuts; ensure front-line nurses play a key role in health reform decisions."

I'm in full agreement and will affix my signature hereto.

### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** I'm joining the members from Durham, London West, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Kitchener Centre and so many other ridings in reading a petition as follows:

"Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

"Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion, is best for their children; and

"Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as those practised in the Montessori and Waldorf schools are best for their children; and

"Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

"Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

"Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent schools as soon as possible."

I affix my signature to this petition.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for children, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 25, An Act to amend the Public Service Act and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, 1993, when Bill 25 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time, the bill shall be ordered referred to the standing committee on general government; and

That no deferral of the second reading vote pursuant to standing order 28(h) shall be permitted; and

That the standing committee on general government shall be authorized to meet for one day of public hearings in Toronto; and

That following one day of public hearings, the standing committee on general government be authorized to meet for one day for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That the committee be authorized to meet beyond its normal hour of adjournment until completion of clause-by-clause consideration; and

That, at 4:30 on that day, those amendments which have not been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 127(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than the first sessional day that reports from committees may be received following the completion of clause-by-clause consideration and not later than June 19, 2001. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on the date provided, the bill shall be deemed to have been passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the standing committee on general government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

That, when the order for third reading is called, two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill to be divided equally among all recognized parties, and at the end of that time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding “deferred votes”; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

Mr Speaker, at this time I'd like to ask for unanimous consent that the member for Kitchener Centre be the leadoff speaker.

**1540**

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Mr Wayne Wetlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** This government has always been and continues to be a prudent manager of the province's resources. This was part of our election promise in 1995 and again in 1999 and is a key element that separates us from the opposition. We are obligated, by the trust given to us by the people of Ontario, to manage the resources of this province in the responsible and effective manner that they deserve and have come to expect.

Part of this promise is to get the most for their money. It involves making wise decisions and taking the tough choices required of real leadership. Ontario offers some of the best services in the world. They are fair, equitable and deliver what the people of this province need. They

help make Ontario the best place to live, work and do business.

But we cannot be content to rest on our laurels. We live in a world that is faster, more dynamic and that demands more flexibility than ever before. My colleague the member for Thornhill illustrated this perfectly when she spoke on second reading. We no longer live in a world where we exclude one gender from senior management positions, families seldom get by on one income, and the entire climate of global business and politics has changed.

The policies and practices of this government must meet these challenges or we will all get left behind. To do this, we must modernize the contextual framework in which we operate. The way we operate must be made the most efficient it can be. We must get more value for our dollar and we can only do this by taking a comprehensive approach to the way we deliver quality services for the tax dollars of the people of Ontario.

The member for Essex said it best during second reading of Bill 25. He said, “There are too many silos today. What you want to do is get co-operation between those ministers and those ministries.” That's what we are trying to do. We do need more co-operation, we need more collaboration and we need a more coordinated approach. The member for Elgin-Middlesex-London seemed to agree when he spoke on second reading. He said, “I think taxpayers want value for their money.” However, it does seem that they do not fully understand the limitations on the government in gaining this efficiency.

The member for Davenport tells us we do not need this bill to root out inefficiency. With all due respect, the member is wrong. The members for York North, Northumberland and I have all stated quite clearly in debate that as it exists right now, the Public Service Act does not allow the civil service the flexibility to take out the waste that exists in overlap between ministries. My colleague the member for York North may have illustrated it best when she envisioned for us the possibilities of joint ministry programs and offices that are just not possible under the current act. Some of these savings are already being realized, but there is no logical reason at all why we should not continue to pursue further savings.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Wetlaufer:** The member for Essex has pointed to us and said that just because something hasn't been changed in 120 years, that doesn't mean a reason shouldn't be given for doing it. Well, we agree with that. Governments should always be held to account, and government should be asked to explain why it chooses the path that it does, and we have done so.

Each member who stood on this side of the House explained at least one important aspect about this bill. Most of us explained many more. The bill improves efficiency. It maintains accountability. It brings some democracy to the workplace. These are all important aspects of this bill. They have been debated thoroughly, and our points have been clear.

The current Public Service Act makes it difficult for the public service to attract specialized talent, especially at executive levels and in high-tech areas. These legislative changes will allow us to make more attractive job offers to new workers with the specialized skills we need, particularly in the high-tech areas.

Updates to the act include increasing initial appointments to the unclassified service to a maximum of three years before they need to renew. It adds term-classified employees, a category that adds an element of flexibility and adaptability which is needed in today's business environment, in today's fast-paced work world. It allows the government to take greatest advantage of specialized talent which is needed for special projects but not necessarily on a permanent basis.

We've heard many times across the way that we should be allowing the present civil service or we should be hiring extra public servants to do these jobs. All that will do is permanently increase the size of the public service when all that is needed are temporary people for temporary projects on a specialized basis.

These employees may have an opportunity to renew their contracts after three years, when appropriate. They will be entitled to many benefits currently available only to full-time classified employees. This will make the Ontario public service more attractive to today's highly specialized and mobile workforce, a workforce that is looking for new challenges and stimulating opportunities. Nothing in the bill overrides any existing provisions in any collective agreements, nor does the bill propose to change any of the classified positions in the public service.

Members opposite would have you believe this bill is all about privatizing the public service. Nothing in this bill will allow the government to further privatize the public service. There are elements that will allow for more private-public partnerships, but this does not equate to selling public service assets. It allows the public sector to work in co-operation with the private sector to meet goals of public good for all Ontarians while bringing more involvement from the private sector, embracing their expertise, their experience and their efficiency, all of which are needed to get the most bang for the taxpayer's buck.

These arguments are disingenuous. They stem from a key component of the bill that allows deputy ministers the ability to delegate some of their authority to supervisors in other ministries or other organizations. To say this is privatization and degradation of the public service is a great exaggeration. Government members have pointed out very clearly that this will be done on a case-by-case basis and that it can only be done with the authorization of the Civil Service Commission. Moreover, each delegation is subject to the same scrutiny and review that comes with all government decisions. There is nothing in this amendment that would allow a deputy minister to simply sell off whole categories or divisions of people. In a worst-case scenario, a person whose authority is delegated can similarly have that delegation

rescinded. There is accountability in this drive for efficiency, and isn't that what the people of Ontario want? Accountability. The fearmongering by the parties across the way, I have to say, I find irresponsible.

1550

The members opposite have also complained that there was little consultation involved in the development of this bill. Again, this is not true. Management Board Secretariat consulted formally with each bargaining unit over a year ago, and they all had opportunity to offer input to the bill. It has been more than 14 months since we began this process. I thought I was very clear in this. I'm sure I was very clear in this. I find it disheartening and unconscionable that the opposition parties would try to expand the grounds of this bill to incite fear in those listening to the debate. They have suggested that this bill includes personal information, including personal health information, and its distribution to the private sector. That simply is not so.

They have suggested this is widespread degradation of the public service. That's not true. They have suggested that this extends political patronage. I have no idea how they can extend this bill to that conclusion. It's a weird interpretation. It is not true. We have explained all these points in the hours of debate on this bill.

In fairness, some of the debate from the members opposite has been thoughtful and well argued. I respect that there are many members who have debated this bill on its merits and have voiced their objections on a matter of principle. I respect that; however, I find it irresponsible to try to extrapolate from these points issues that are not included in the bill. This only helps to bring confusion to the debate and signals to me that they have run out of legitimate points and are grasping at straws to prolong debate and obfuscate the process.

I am convinced that second reading has, in general, been thoughtful and thorough, and that it is now time to move forward on the bill.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** I usually say I am pleased to get up to debate in this House, but continually I have to think that I'm not. Today we're really looking at two things, aren't we? We're looking at a motion that is going to choke off debate on a very important piece of legislation. The government, for whatever reason, has decided there's simply not much use in going on to talk about this, and I think it happens too often in this Legislature.

We have an audience viewing this on TV today, I'm sure, and we have pages who are in the Legislature with us every day. I want them to understand, and I want the folks at home to understand, that when I was sent down here on behalf of my constituents to debate important issues, they expected I would be given every opportunity to do that. There are colleagues of mine who haven't yet had an opportunity to debate this bill. I was fortunate enough to lead off the debate and to bring to the Legislature some history of the public service.

The public service was created about 83 years ago, actually, but before that there was a public service

commissioner. It was created so that it would depoliticize the employment of civil servants. We know—in fact you still hear stories in some provinces—that when governments change, there are significant wholesale job changes. That's why we brought in a civil service. It was to take the politics out of it, to train and employ, for the most part, a professional civil service. What's going to happen with this legislation is that's going to be taken away.

We've heard the government say time after time through part of this debate that this doesn't allow wholesale privatization, but there's no restriction on this. Deputy ministers may delegate their authority to other deputy ministers. For goodness' sake, why would one deputy minister want to delegate authority to another deputy minister? After all, one would assume it's his responsibility and that the responsibility should be kept within his ministry. But it goes further than that. Not only can they delegate their authority to another deputy minister, but they can delegate their authority to "other person or persons," and that's what's scary. My interpretation has been that that's the private sector, and I've heard the government deny that this is an attempt at wholesale privatization, but I haven't yet heard the government prove to us that those other person or persons aren't the private sector. I believe in my heart of hearts that's what it is.

Along with that delegation to the private sector, aside from the fact that it could tear the gut out of the civil service, those other person or persons are going to have to have information about the employees that they have. This, then, is going to lead to—in fact I'll read—"It allows the ministry's ability to collect information and, along with other changes, this information could then be maintained by private companies."

My friend across the way just said a few minutes ago that the government has explained in hours of debate that there's no danger in this. The problem is, I don't trust them. The reason I don't trust them is what we saw in the fiasco of the Province of Ontario Savings Office, the scandal that was created when a private company got information that was collected on individuals and gave it to this private organization and it was used, information that should never have been in the public domain. My view is that the Harris government has a terrible track record on privacy issues, and that's why I'm afraid that if this information collected by ministries on their employees gets out into the private sector we are going to have those problems again.

Where personal information is collected in the integrated human resources program, whatever personal information the government chooses to include in this integrated human resources program, including medical information, could get to the private sector, and that is one of the areas in this piece of legislation that I have a huge problem with.

I want to refer back to something that I brought up in debate when this legislation was first introduced. It was a long-time professional public servant who retired in June

2000, Rita Burak, an outstanding civil servant who was recognized for her service to governments of all stripes. She rose through the ranks of the civil service and ended up being secretary of cabinet. One might consider, or I think most consider, this to be the highest rank of a civil service. Now what's going to happen if we take our civil service and start to denigrate it? Where are those professionals going to come from? Who's going to want to be part of the civil service?

**1600**

We talk about contracts. We're going to make some of three years instead of one year. I'm not so sure that the one-year contracts have always provided us with the very best of talent and I'm frankly not sure that a three-year contract is going to do this. Oh, sure, it can be extended, but who in today's economy is going to say, "I think I'll go to work for the government for three years. I'm going to take that chance"? I think they're going to start out looking for employment somewhere else, and that's too bad because we want a public service that's going to attract the very best. We know that there's competition out there and that we have to compete with private industry, but we want the civil service, the government, to be in a position where it too can offer the very best employment to its employees. Again, I just don't trust this government on how far they're going to take this farming out of responsibility.

We talk about accountability. The problem is that when you start to water down the responsibility government has and farm it out to the private sector, you lose accountability because it's always easier to blame the other guy. We don't want that in government. If I were on the government side, I would want the accountability and I would want to be able to point to that accountability. I don't want to have to blame someone else for it and say, "That's not my responsibility." An example we hear time after time, even today, is when school boards are faced with very difficult decisions on school closings. The government sits there and says, "We're not closing schools. School boards are," and when it was the hospital closings, "We don't close hospitals. They close hospitals."

All I want to do is make sure this government is accountable, and you can't do that if you keep foisting things off on to other people. When it gets out so that it's foisted on to your friends in the private sector, it gets even worse. So I want us to look very seriously at this legislation, notwithstanding the fact that we're standing here today and are going to cut off democratic debate.

What does the government say? "We'll give one day of public hearings in Toronto." Big deal. Let me tell you, and the government backbenchers know this full well, there are a whole bunch of us who live in small urban and rural Ontario who may be interested in this legislation. You're not going to get, number one, very many people on the docket for one day because that's not a full working day, we all know, in the city of Toronto. Then we're going to have one day of clause-by-clause, and that's a futile process to go through. I'll stand here

today, and many of you know I'm not a gambling person, but there won't be one opposition amendment that will be accepted in that clause-by-clause review of this legislation. Not one. As I stand here today, I'll do something silly for you if one clause, one amendment, gets through.

Then we're going to come back and we're going to have two hours of debate at third reading. That, too, is ludicrous.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** Is that like wearing a bow tie?

**Mr Crozier:** Careful. The minister is remarking about my bow tie, and I'm liable to untie it and tie it up just to show you how well I can do it. Yesterday, I had my Lester B. Pearson bow tie on.

But back to the debate and the seriousness of it. We're going to end up with two hours of third reading debate. That just doesn't cut it. Often the Premier is criticized for having some sort of disinterest in the Legislature or disdain for the Legislature. I'm inclined to think that's true because what we do in here not only becomes less and less relevant, but it becomes less and less relevant because we just cut it off. The only thing I can say to the backbench members of the government is that when they restrict our right to stand up and speak on behalf of our constituents, whoever decides that debate is going to be limited cuts off your rights as well. You should be complaining that you don't have the opportunity to stand in this place, even when it disagrees with me, and it usually does, and speak on behalf of your constituents. That's a shame.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I appreciate the opportunity today, one of the very few opportunities we get any more around here to speak about anything, on this, yet another time allocation motion. Mr Speaker, you will remember that before Christmas, I did the same job as you in this place and frankly got tired of the ham-handed way this government continued, time and time again, to bring pieces of legislation before this House of great import to all of us because they affect the lives we live, the communities we live in, the way we interact with each other in major and serious ways, and they are simply brought here because, I suppose, they have to at least do that, and then are rammed through in short order, usually on a Wednesday. Interestingly enough, here we are, on another Wednesday. My colleague from Nickel Belt is wont to say on Wednesdays—I remember hearing her when I was in that chair you occupy today—"It's Wednesday, so it must be another allocation motion," or, "Another allocation motion, so it must be Wednesday."

That's the pattern around here now. Every week another piece of legislation that has great import to the people of this province is time-allocated, usually given a minimal opportunity to be heard and seen at the committee level, so that those of us in opposition don't have a real opportunity to debate and discuss it across the table with members of the government and others of the broader community so that we might assess the shortcomings or failings of a particular piece of legislation, understand more clearly how in the end it will impact

those people we serve and speak so sincerely about, and then bring forward amendments.

I agree with the member from Essex when he says that in this instance, as in so many other instances we see—he's taking a calculated risk when he says he'll make a bet that there will be no amendments put or received because he knows the track record here is quite consistent—in fact in most instances, even when amendments are brought forward and offered, they are not received in the spirit they are brought forward in and very seldom see the light of day in the legislation that is ultimately passed, which, as I said, affects all of us in very serious and significant ways.

I want, in the few minutes I have here this afternoon, to speak about the—should I say, dare I say, will I be allowed to say?—hypocrisy that this—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** I will ask you to withdraw.

**Mr Martin:** I will not be allowed to say it. I withdraw the word.

**The Acting Speaker:** I will ask you to withdraw that, please.

**Mr Martin:** Inconsistency—is that a word? I withdraw the word "hypocrisy" and I instead put the word "inconsistency" on the record. Is that OK to the Speaker?

It's the inconsistency in the things we hear from this government by way of speeches from the throne and some of the public relations and communications efforts they put out there—the budget speech etc—where they speak about democracy.

We had the Premier this afternoon talking about democracy in this place and giving us that old fist across the chest about how wonderful democracy is and how we're all so committed to it, and how we should be doing things around here that speak of democracy, having hearings and listening to people and including what they say in the deliberations we have, and at the end of the day ultimately bringing forward and approving legislation that has the fingerprints of as many people as possible on that piece of work so that we know that when it's done it will be enhancing or building on or helpful to the common life that we all share in this province.

1610

Here we are today time-allocating a motion that has had as little as eight hours and 15 minutes of debate in this place. When you consider that around here we usually get about two hours in the afternoon, from 4 o'clock to about 6 o'clock, and then about three and three quarter hours in the evening, what this means is that we've had less than two days of discussion about a bill that I'm not going to go into here this afternoon. My colleague from Nickel Belt will in some serious and significant way. I've already spoken on it, actually. The last time in that eight hours and 15 minutes we had I had a few minutes to put some thoughts on the record.

But eight hours and 15 minutes, not even two days of work in this place, dedicated to a piece of legislation that will have major ramifications for a whole lot of people,

particularly civil servants, who are very concerned at this time in their communities about their future, about their jobs, about their ability to continue to give of themselves reflective of the education that they have partaken in, the commitment they've made to bettering themselves, the experience they've had, that they will be able to continue to offer in a way that reflects the seriousness and the value in that; and to be, in turn, valued by way of the pay they get, the recognition they get from their employer; and by so doing, contribute then to their own well-being, the well-being of their families, their children, the well-being of their community, to which they contribute significantly in hours above and beyond their work time to raise the quality of life.

This is a bill that will affect that very seriously, and yet here we are: eight hours and 15 minutes of debate, a promise of a day of hearings, probably here in Toronto, another exercise in—mind you, we're thankful we have a day. Imagine people out there and on this side of the House saying, "Thank you so much for a day of hearings on a piece of legislation that's so important," when in fact a day is really nothing compared to some of the consultation we've had on pieces of legislation similar to this, which has the potential to have such a tremendous impact on the people we represent in this place.

The interesting piece about this eight hours and 15 minutes is that in fact this is more than most pieces of legislation get. The argument that's made by some across the way here this afternoon, that eight hours and 15 minutes is a lot of time, more than we normally get for pieces of legislation around this place, says a whole lot.

Let me just refer to what this government said in its speech from the throne, delivered in this place on April 19, about democracy and about process and about involving members of this House in a meaningful way in the making of laws that affect all of us.

"The 21st century demands that Ontario's democratic processes be modern and responsive.

"The 21st step of the plan is support for parliamentary reform, particularly changes that enhance the role and responsibilities of MPPs."

I wonder what they mean by that.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Martin:** The member for St Catharines says, "That's a joke." Well, it is. But it's even worse than a joke; it's sad. It is inconsistent, Mr Speaker, because I can't use that other word, by this government to, on one hand, say that they want to enhance the role and responsibilities of MPPs and yet, on every Wednesday that we come here, bring forward a time allocation that effectively curtails, cuts off, closes down the possibility, the opportunity for MPPs to actually participate in a meaningful way in discussion around this place about legislation that's going to affect the lives of all of those we represent.

Does that not present as inconsistent to members across the way? Does that not present to you folks out there listening to the debate this afternoon as somewhat inconsistent in terms of what the government says and

then ultimately does, time allocation after eight hours and 15 minutes, after less than two days of debate on a piece of legislation that's going to have a major impact and effect on the lives of people across this province?

It goes on to say, "The government will propose that more issues, particularly those requiring in-depth examination and considered recommendations, be referred to legislative committees." This has got to be good news for a whole lot of people out there listening to this. But the question that we need to be asking this government is, how is that going to play out? Who's going to decide, for example, what issues will require in-depth examination and considered recommendations? Who will decide which legislation?

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** Do you trust John Baird to?

**Mr Martin:** He'd be one of the people, and no, I don't, frankly. He'll be one of the people who will decide which pieces of legislation require in-depth examination and considered recommendations. The minister pushing this piece of legislation that's before us today, the Minister of Labour—we know from experience around here how he respects or understands or is willing to listen to the voice of those people the legislation he proposes in this place is going to affect.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Martin:** It's OK, yes, if they're big business. I guess that'll be the definition. If big business brings forward a piece of legislation, that will—it should, actually, in fact—require in-depth examination and considered recommendations. But, again, I think it speaks to the very real confusion that exists here and will exist around that whole question of, what is it any more, if not everything that we do here, that requires in-depth examination and considered recommendations?

I would suggest to you that the track record of this place up until 1995 was that any piece of legislation brought forward by government was of a serious nature and required that in-depth discussion and recommendation brought forth by everybody and anybody who had an interest or a view or, particularly, who were going to be affected directly by the legislation that was going to be brought forward.

It goes on to say, "It wants to restore the importance of the process by which MPPs hold the government accountable." I wonder what they mean by that? "It wants to restore the importance of the process by which MPPs hold the government accountable." Now, I'm guessing that they mean they're going to make their own caucus meetings longer and give the members of their caucus, instead of two minutes, maybe three minutes to interject and to speak on particular pieces of legislation that they're considering bringing forward, because I'll tell you, if their track record up to now is consistent, it certainly won't be about members on this side of the House having greater opportunity to participate and partake in the debate that happens in this place, particularly if what we're doing here today is reflective of that very nice statement made in the speech from the throne but

which is playing itself out in such a very real and obvious way here this afternoon.

Imagine, "It wants to restore the importance of the process by which MPPs hold the government accountable," and here we are this afternoon, asking the government to take its time, slow down, be considerate in terms of the opportunity that you provide, not only to members of this House duly elected by constituencies from across this province, but to the general public out there, particularly those who are going to be affected most directly by the legislation that you're passing. I have to say to you, eight hours and 15 minutes doesn't do it and one day of public consultation doesn't do it either. So I don't know what they mean by that.

It also says here, "It will propose that the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly explore other parliamentary reforms that would enhance the role of private members and expand the use of technology." I'm not sure if we can get into the expanded use of technology debate; we probably will at another time. But this business of exploring other parliamentary reforms that would enhance the role of private members—I dare say to the members across the way that changing the rules in the way that you have over the last five to six years has in fact taken us back 10 or 20 years in terms of enhancing the role of private members. In fact, I have to say that any time we change the rules around here—and we've all partaken in that exercise. I remember—I wasn't here then—the Liberals changed the rules, and then we changed the rules when we were in government and now you've changed the rules. You know, a majority government always does that in order to enhance its own ability to push forward more quickly the legislation that they in their wisdom feel is in the best interests of the people of the province.

**1620**

I suggest to you that a long, long time ago a group of people sat around a table talking about how we might provide for democracy in this jurisdiction, put together a set of rules and regulations, put together a process, put in place a significant number of checks and balances that were about enhancing the role of private members to participate in this place in a meaningful way, to speak on behalf of and reflect the views of their constituents.

Every time you as a government bring in a time allocation motion to this place, every time, after eight hours or seven hours or nine hours of debate, you bring in a piece of legislation that does none other than to limit the amount of debate that's going to happen here in this place, to limit the ability of members to participate, to cut off the possibility of committees going around the province, hearing from people about particular initiatives, you fly in the face of those wonderful things you speak about in some of the documents that you put out and some of the public relations exercises you participate in, none more recently than the speech from the throne, in which you talk about parliamentary reform.

I would suggest to you today that all of you go back and take a look at that, because what we're doing here

today is not consistent with that very real and important and exciting direction that you said you wanted to go in. Thank you very much.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton):** I'm very pleased to join in the debate this afternoon. I'd say that it's important in our society for its institutions to conduct themselves in a manner which is open, fair and democratic. I'm sure the members opposite will agree with me on this basic principle.

We elect our members of Parliament, school board trustees, mayors and town councils. We choose between parties and their respective platforms. In this regard, we choose which person or group will best represent our interests, but it's not all so simple. The majority rules, but with the responsibility to all persons in this society. No government can rule with impunity and cater only to the majority. It must proceed in all cases with the best interests of the greater good and take tough choices which are not just popular but right.

This principle should be extended to other areas of our lives. But imagine if we did not have this option to choose, if we were prevented from selecting from the full range of options. This, in essence, is the situation for the civilian employees of the Ontario Provincial Police. They are currently barred from choosing a representative in a very important aspect of their life that they feel best represents them. This is inherently undemocratic.

Members of the government side have made very clear our position on this issue. It is a matter of fundamental fairness and democracy that employees should have the right to choose which organization best represents them. Let me emphasize the key word in here, which is "choice." These amendments do not dictate that civilians in the OPP shall be represented by another organization. It does not imply that they should be represented by another organization. It only specifies that they should have the right to choose which organization best suits their needs.

Imagine the outrage if members opposite were told they could not elect their public representatives; if they were told they could not elect leaders of unions; if they were told they could not choose between something as minor as where they buy their own groceries. Why are they not upset over who represents them in the workplace?

As it stands, this is highly unfair. No law prevents people from voting for a different representative, no law prevents them from switching grocery stores, yet a law prevents nearly 2,500 people from switching their bargaining unit, an organization which represents their interests regarding wages, work conditions and workplace equity. I wish the members of the opposition could explain the legitimacy behind that.

This is an important part of this bill, yet it is an issue that has been given short shrift, not by members on this side of the House but by members opposite, who have been satisfied to spout rhetoric. They have proposed no meaningful changes nor suggested helpful insight. Instead, it has been rhetoric: "union-busting," "privatiza-

tion" and "degradation" is what we hear. We believe that this debate has been complete but, if it's not, it is because too many of their members have chosen to ignore the substance of the bill and have tried to extrapolate into areas which this bill does not affect.

My colleagues the members for Kitchener Centre, York North, Thornhill and Northumberland have all done admirable jobs of debating the finer points of this bill. It introduces more efficiency, ensures accountability and brings in more democracy. In fairness, some members have mentioned these issues but have couched them so deeply in rhetoric and fearmongering that it is difficult to tell if they have a problem with the legislation or if they're just trying to delay passage of a government bill.

Let me review for members of the House what this section of the bill will do.

First, it will allow civilian employees of the OPP to evaluate whether their current bargaining unit properly represents them. These employees perform important roles such as forensic sciences, administration and mechanical work.

Second, the OPPA will have to show the labour relations board that they have adequate support to bring about a vote on whether OPP civilians want to join the OPPA.

Third, if these civilian employees are not happy with their bargaining unit and the OPPA shows the labour relations board that they have sufficient support, they will vote on whether to join the OPPA.

Fourth, each member would be able to vote their conscience in a secret ballot. It would be a fair process that meets the same standards of the Ontario Labour Relations Act and would be overseen by the labour relations board.

Fifth, should these people choose to join the Ontario Provincial Police Association, this would make them consistent with civilian employees of municipal police services who are represented by their local police associations.

Finally, the standards for these members to leave their current bargaining unit and join the Ontario Provincial Police Association will all be consistent with those in the Labour Relations Act.

Another important aspect of this bill is the creation of the term "classified employees." This amendment would make it easier for the government to attract executive and specialized skills into government for time-limited projects which are by their nature not permanent. Both parties opposite should know this. It was explained in briefing to either their critics or House leaders, had follow-up questions answered by ministry staff, and government members have explained this aspect ad nauseam. It should be perfectly clear. However, many members opposite do not care to understand or they purposely exaggerate the magnitude of these appointments.

These positions require specialized expertise which the civil service neither has nor needs on a permanent basis. Nonetheless, in a dynamic and fast-paced business world, there is the need for people who can effect change

in order to make best use of the scarce resources available. The government has been very clear about this. It would be unfeasible and undesirable for the civil service to replace tens of thousands of classified employees upon whom Ontario depends to develop and implement quality programs and services. We have stated this, but the parties opposite insist upon saying that we are using this to drive out classified staff and busting unions in the process.

All organizations rely on contract workers to some extent. They can provide immediate and flexible expertise which helps the government to deliver on things that the people of Ontario want and need in a more timely manner. There is no logical reason to suggest that extending their maximum term from one to three years will result in greater reliance on these contract workers.

As the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington put it, one would be left with the impression that contract workers equal poor quality. I'm shocked and appalled that she would suggest that these hard-working men and women lack the sense of dedication and commitment to service that their counterparts have who happen to work there on a full-time basis. I challenge her to talk to some of the rank-and-file employees of the public service and estimate which ones are on contract, based on their commitment and quality of work. This is just an example of the wild assumptions that some members of the opposition and of the third party have made. For lack of substantial arguments, they have extrapolated what could be. Their only suggestions have come from what could be. There could be personal health information included in the records if it's not specifically excluded was one example.

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There are many examples of what is not included in this legislation, and it would be a waste of time to enumerate them. To do so could imply that others are not ruled out, and I'm sure that it would not be the members' opposite intent to limit what could be covered under this legislation for want of what is not specifically excluded. It's a specious argument.

After three days of debate, covering more than seven hours and 30 speakers, there has been more than adequate time to address the key issues in this bill. The members opposite have addressed some meaningful points, but their wild assumptions and fearmongering only compromise this public discussion and obstruct the business of this House.

So I support this motion, and I encourage the other members to do so also.

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston):** I'm happy to speak to this bill. Unfortunately, it is a motion on time allocation, and that causes me great concern, because this government has invoked time allocation far more often than any previous government. Essentially, and I say this to the backbench government members, the more often the government uses this method of operation, the more we in this Parliament suffer, the less time the members of this place—and I remind the government

members that you are members, elected to represent your constituents—have to deal with meaningful and substantive questions. You're not doing that. This has become largely a rubber stamp. This assembly is a rubber stamp. It manufactures government bills and processes them far more quickly than at any time before. If you think that's good in a democracy, well, I've got to say to you, just look at the record. You've gotten enormous numbers of pieces of legislation incorrect and have had to bring them back to this place. Just look at past history, when this House, with its committees—and I'm going to go into that subject in just a moment—used to sit far more often and had greater debate in the past than we have witnessed in the last five or six years.

This place is being reduced to redundancy, and that is lamentable. All of us have to stand up and say, "Enough is enough." We have to have a say in how these matters are decided. Each piece of legislation that goes before this assembly has to be examined in its fullest detail. That is not happening. Eight hours of debate for this piece of legislation, which is, by the way, a very important piece of legislation and I want to comment on it in just a moment, is simply not enough. It's simply not enough.

If you're going to manufacture widgets, you want to do it faster. If you're going to increase the volume in a manufacturing plant, you want to do it more efficiently and faster and sell that on the marketplace quicker. But you don't want to do that with democracy. Democracy takes time. We've made these speeches before in this House, whether it was the amalgamation of the city of Toronto or a variety of other important matters. This government attempts to ram everything through very quickly without giving members an opportunity to comment.

We used to have select committees sitting on a variety of issues, very important matters. Don't tell me that today, in this day and age, with the complexity of our society and the complexity of the knowledge-based economy that we're having to deal with, there isn't a role that is important and critical for us to play, that this Legislature should not sit more often and look into matters of real importance for this province. My God, there used to be select committees on just about every important subject of the day, and I've been here since 1985. We had numerous select committees sitting to deal with the important issues of the day, whether it was free trade or any number of other issues. But I have yet to see this government—and I stand to be corrected—appoint a select committee to deal with an important matter in this assembly during the time of this government's existence. I say that with all due respect. That has not happened. It just denigrates further the role of the individual member in this place.

If you want to expand the role of the member, then for God's sake, stop invoking these time allocation motions. Give members an opportunity to have a say, a real say, in how legislation comes forward. There is a lot that's being decided here that is critical. When you look at this act which is being time-allocated, which deals with con-

tracting out, the fact of the matter is, the more we contract out, the less of a say citizens have with respect to that privatization that takes place, the further removed it is from the citizens of Ontario.

Privatization of this fashion, in this way, leads to less accountability in the long run. I'll get to why that is in just a moment.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Only a Liberal would draw that conclusion.

**Mr Cordiano:** No, it's very true. When we're talking about critical aspects of our economy and our lives, whether it's the environment, whether it's health care, things that are truly important to our citizens—and I as an Ontarian do not want to see inspection of our water and sewer facilities go to the private sector, because there is a question of confidence there, there is a question of trust.

Over the years, good Tory administrations, Progressive Conservative governments, built an enormous amount of goodwill and trust among the Ontario electorate. That's why they got re-elected for 42 years, time and again. But what they also did—and I think this is a testament to their good government—was build the Ontario civil service to be one of the finest anywhere in the world. They had a stellar status. They were considered to be the finest civil servants certainly anywhere in this country, rivalling those in Ottawa and certainly anywhere around the world. That was responded to positively by the people of this province. Most people had a great deal of confidence in the civil service. When inspections of our water took place and testing needed to be done, people invested their confidence and their faith in what those civil servants were doing. Obviously, that is no longer the case. When you privatized those labs, you no longer had the same degree of confidence, and what resulted in the Walkerton situation is nothing short of a disaster. We'll leave that for the commission to really determine, because I'll be accused of being biased in this place.

Ultimately, when the civil service is decimated, when it is denigrated, when it is emasculated to the point where it has no critical core components, even when you contract out, even at the end of the day when you contract out, what remains in terms of the collective expertise will not be sufficient to determine if the contracting out to the private sector has been conducted properly, if a good choice was made, because you no longer have the expertise in-house to determine that those private contracts are being carried out with the proper expertise in the private sector.

The public servants who remain will not have that critical mass of expertise to be able to make those good decisions that they made in the past. So it's not a solution. It really is a cost-cutting measure. Let's call it what it is. It's not a measure to make things better, more efficient; it's simply a cost-reduction exercise.

you're contracting out—that's what this bill essentially provides for, a cost-reduction method, and it's not accident. When the government no longer has the resources to pay for the services that are required, they have to find ways to cut. What that means essentially is that quality suffers. There is no longer the standard that there used to be. The standard for the public service was exemplary, whether it was testing water or inspection of processing plants, etc. All these things are called into question now. We have fewer inspectors in all kinds of areas, and I think the government is leaving it to the private sector more and more. Whether it's self-regulatory bodies or inspections that are conducted by outside agencies, it will in the end deliver less quality, less assurance, less confidence in these areas for the public.

I think it is ultimately a real failure on the part of any government to let down citizens when it comes to ensuring public safety. I think the buck stops with this government, any government in this province, when it comes to making certain our public is safe. Inspection of rides at amusement parks, inspection of water, inspection of processing plants, food: all these things are essential to citizens, and we trust the government and the civil service to ensure that those quality standards are met. This bill, as you contract out more and more, provides for a loosening of that and, ultimately, a deterioration of quality and a deterioration in the confidence people have in public institutions.

That is really what this government's agenda is all about, to move more and more to a private sector model, privatizing just about every function. I'm not opposed to privatizing certain things. But when it comes to safety, quality inspections with regard to health care and to education, when it comes to our food and the water we drink, these are essential things that cannot be left in private hands. The government stands out tall, and it must protect the interests of the public. You are abandoning what I think has largely been traditionally and historically the role the Ontario government has played in the past, and that is a real departure from our traditions in this province. I think it's a dangerous path that we're following.

I cannot support this government's direction with respect to the way it deals with legislation in this assembly. We sit less often and, frankly, we're unable to have meaningful debate in this House as often as should be the case. Our committees sit less often. I think the role of the backbencher in this place has been denigrated, and we have ourselves to blame. We have a system where the executive branch and the legislative branch sit side by side in the same assembly. As a result of that, it is even more important and more essential for all of us to take our roles very, very seriously and to demand that we have the proper time allocated for debate in this assembly. It is not sufficient for this government to behave as though the assembly doesn't exist, as though the only important element in this government is the executive in the Premier's office, and by decree they just rubberstamp what goes on in this assembly. You get second and third readings before anybody notices.

By the way, it's not just for the members to have input; it's also for the Ontario public to have input. Why we want legislation to be slowed down in terms of processing is so the public can have a say, and why committees exist is so the public has an opportunity to come before legislators to make their concerns felt—(a) to be informed and (b) to have input. That is no longer happening on a regular basis. As a result, I think citizens are becoming more disillusioned with the process and have become more removed from what we do at Queen's Park. That is lamentable, and I think we need to correct that.

It's incumbent on us in this assembly to demand that legislation be processed in a reasonable amount of time and that the Legislative Assembly sit a reasonable amount of time for that purpose. We don't just come here because we're filling our chairs and trying to put in time. We come here because there are important matters to be debated. That is happening less and less, and that is very lamentable.

I just want to wrap up by saying this bill is not something we support, and the time allocation motion is reprehensible.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** In the few minutes that are available to each caucus—you see, this is a time allocation motion. What it does is kill debate. It cuts debate off. It stifles debate. It says to elected members of this Parliament, "You're not going to be allowed to do what you were elected to do." One would think a time allocation motion would be a relatively novel thing. But they're notable mostly because of the frequency with which they're imposed. As a matter of fact, one is hard-pressed to identify any substantial piece of legislation that's gone through this Legislature in the last five and six years that hasn't had debate on it quashed by virtue of time allocation closure motions.

They used to be a rarity. It was the rare occasion when the government would seek closure, when the government would want to cut off debate. As a matter of fact, let's put this in the context it has to be put in if we're going to understand the significance of the frequency of this government's use of time allocation closure motions. Closure motions were utilized from time to time when there weren't the rigid restrictions on debate that exist now. Closure motions were utilized by governments during a time when a member, for all intents and purposes—well, for every purpose—as long as he or she could stand at their desk and their mike, could speak ad infinitum, could close off the debate at six at night and have the floor again the next time the bill was called and close off debate and have the floor again.

That's what closure motions were for. Closure motions were put to the Speaker, and the Speaker had a discretion to determine whether there had been sufficient, adequate, fair and thorough debate. Speakers did deny closure motions. They did. Speakers more than infrequently said, "No, we're not finished the debate yet. You're not going to have closure." But the government changed the rules. The Mike Harris Tories changed the rules.

And they didn't change the rules to incorporate any standard of fairness. Far from it. They changed the rules to express their disdain for elected members—not just elected opposition members, but their own elected members. I've been here during the course of debates when Conservative backbenchers didn't even stand up to speak. During the rotation—you know, Conservative, Liberal, New Democrat, Conservative, Liberal, New Democrat—it was Liberal, New Democrat, Liberal, New Democrat. Conservative members don't even—and there's a whole lot more of them than there are even Liberals, never mind New Democrats. We're a small caucus. We know that.

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For the life of me, I can't imagine why any fair-minded, conscious member of this Legislature would support this time allocation motion. There have only been three afternoons of debate on this issue. The largest number of MPPs, elected members in this Legislature, haven't had a chance yet to express their views—never mind their views, but their constituents' views—on Bill 25. And Bill 25 is not just an innocent little bit of fluff. It's not just a little old housekeeping bill. It's not some benign little thing that should be passed in short order. No, Bill 25 is a substantial attack on the public service. It is a bill which is a critical part of this government's privatization agenda. You know what privatization is, huh? That's when the government wants to—and has been, and is, and will continue to until it's defeated—seize those things, those institutions, those public services that were built over the course of decades and generations by our parents and by our grandparents, with their tax dollars: things like public education, public health care, public waterworks. Remember when public waterworks meant that everybody in Ontario could have access to safe drinking water?

You see, that's what privatization does. Because the government is seizing those things that people in Ontario built, our parents and grandparents, yes, and those before them, seizing those things that those folks built over the course of decades and generations and handing them off, giving them away, to this government's corporate, for-profit, private friends—more often than not, American corporate, for-profit private friends. Privatization is all about taking public tax dollars and converting them into private profits.

Let's understand something very, very clearly. I think I've mentioned this to you once before. I was reading a book by a fellow called George Soros.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** He's not a left-winger; he's a right-winger. He's a capitalist, a very wealthy capitalist, an extremely wealthy capitalist. He spent a lifetime trading currencies. In one of his recent books, even he writes about the crisis of capitalism—George Soros, the capitalist's capitalist, an extremely wealthy man, a market person, a money transactor-trader, a stock trader, a man who's made millions, possibly even billions. He could even be a billionaire. But George Soros made it clear. He

explained what the corporate world is all about. He explained that corporations have one *raison d'être* and one *raison d'être* only: a corporation's sole function is to make profit, and that's neither good nor bad. It's not a value judgment; it's just the reality. We've gone through this little exercise before.

When the shareholders of General Motors are at their annual general meeting, they don't say, "Oh, I have a question," and then ask the CEO, the top honcho of General Motors, "How many jobs did we create last year?" No, shareholders don't ask that. Shareholders of General Motors don't put up their hands and say, "Oh, CEO, how many hospitals and schools did we help build last year?" Shareholders don't ask that. Shareholders don't say, "Oh, CEO, did we make anybody's environment cleaner and safer?" No, shareholders say, "How much profit did we make?" That's the function of a corporation.

Those are the corporations to which this government is handing over not just control but ownership of our public services: our health care system, our schools, yes, our waterworks, our sewer systems, our ambulance services, our firefighting services, our jails—handed over to the corporate, for-profit private, US corporate, for-profit private sector, so that they can make profit, which is their only function. Wackenhut Corrections Corp of America, the Utah-based private American corporate, for-profit jail operator that the Penetanguishene superjail was handmade for, tailor-designed for, its shareholders don't say, "Did we rehabilitate more prisoners this year than we did last year?" Rich shareholders don't say, "Oh, private, corporate American, for-profit jail operator, did we make communities safer last year?" Its shareholders say, "How much money did we make last year? What was our profit?"

The private sector doesn't give a tinker's damn about safer communities, healthier communities, more prosperous communities. They don't care about better environments, cleaner environments. They don't care about the quality of the public service and the independence of the public service. They care about profit. That's not a value judgment; that's neither good nor bad. That's the nature of the beast. Not only do I believe that, but ultra-right-wing, ultra-conservative capitalists believe that. They know it. That's why George Soros wrote about corporations in his book that I referred to and explained them in that way and explained them for a very clear purpose. He was warning his colleagues—even as a very right-wing, ultra-conservative, very, very wealthy ultra capitalist; he's a capitalist's capitalist—to be careful what you wish for.

Look, I'm not ashamed to say—I'm proud to say and I'll say it anywhere, any time, I'll say it right here now—that I'm on the side of the union. I have no qualms about acknowledging that, as I did today with Marilyn Churley outside this Legislature when Leah Casselman and other OPSEU members were out here with their condemnation of and their protest against Bill 25. I was proud to stand with them, like I told you earlier, shoulder to shoulder,

arm in arm, any time. I will, quite frankly, go one further and say thank God for the trade union movement, because I believe the trade union movement has, continues to and will do more to effect social justice, economic justice, to fight evils like racism and sexism, because they're doing it out there on the ground. As a matter of fact, I'll say this: the trade union movement does more to create social justice and economic justice and fight evils like racism and sexism, does more to achieve those goals than any political party ever could, because they're out there on the ground. They're out there on the shop floor. They're working with each other as sisters and brothers. They're working in solidarity.

I understand that this government has a lot of reasons to not like trade unions. Among other things, it doesn't like working people. It likes poor working people even less.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Come on, guys, this is the government that for six years now hasn't increased the minimum wage in this province by one cent, not a penny. Hey, but catch this one: these are the guys who wanted a 42% increase in their own salaries—not a penny for minimum wage earners, some of the hardest-working people in our province.

Do you understand what minimum wage is? I'm talking about the quantum. I'm talking the \$6.85 an hour. Do you realize there are people working 40-hour weeks in this province, working darn hard to boot, taking home \$225, trying to support not only themselves but, more often than not, some kids or maybe an elderly parent on that money? They're out there, Speaker. I know them. I suspect you know a few too.

You've got Tory MPPs who wanted to increase their salaries by 42%, and they won't give a penny, not a nickel, not a dime, to the lowest-paid workers in this province. Like I told you, they don't like trade unions, they like working people even less, and the poorest workers of all they seem to despise. They hold them in obvious disgust and disdain. I understand. This government's got a lot of reasons to dislike the trade union. One of the reasons it has to dislike the trade union movement is that the trade union movement operates on the concept of collective effort, solidarity. It scares the daylights out of these guys. It scares the daylights out of the Harris Tories, the concept of solidarity. These Tories have spent the last six years in this province trying to create cracks, trying to create schisms, trying to destroy the solidarity of working people. But the union has stood strong.

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I'll tell you another reason, among many, why this government doesn't like trade unions. You see, Leah Casselman and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union have been at the forefront from day one, have been at the vanguard of the fight against this government's privatization agenda. They have been there. They have been bloodied on the sidewalks outside of this building by what amounted to nothing more than Harris troops. I was there. I saw the blood. I saw the wounded. OPSEU

workers were bloodied outside this building, the supposed centre of democracy.

What's democratic about this time allocation motion? What's democratic about cutting off debate? What's democratic about telling MPPs that they're not going to be allowed to debate a piece of legislation that's going to pave the way for even more rapid privatization, for this government to pursue its privatization agenda, which amounts to nothing more than theft of public assets from the people of Ontario?

Let's take a look at what the time allocation motion really says.

**Interjection:** Have you read it?

**Mr Kormos:** Some doughhead over there asked me if I read it. Of course I have. Don't be stupid. Of course I've read it. That's why I'm debating it.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Mr Crozier makes reference to the doughhead, and those are the guys in government. Those are the guys passing laws. Doesn't make you feel very warm and secure, does it? Scary stuff—man oh man.

This time allocation motion means that the next time this bill is called it will be voted upon. It sends it to committee for one crummy afternoon when it impacts on thousands of workers in this province, when it union bashes and robs over 2,000 public sector workers of their status as members of a bona fide trade union, OPSEU, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, a trade union that has proven over and over again that it will go to bat for its employees and it will fight for them and it will negotiate contracts for them, that it will fight to retain their right to strike for them. But I understand, because this is a government that doesn't believe workers should have a right to strike. This is a government that doesn't believe that workers are entitled to withdraw their labour.

It wasn't that long ago in North American and indeed world history when there were economies that didn't accept that workers had a right to withdraw their labour, because those were economies, the latifundia economies of the southern United States, where they owned their workers. It's called slavery. That's what it's called. Do you know what? You see this government moving more and more—because we've got another bill before this House, which I suspect is going to be the victim of time allocation as well, which does the very same thing. It does it to ambulance workers, tells them that they don't have the right to withdraw their labour.

How can any of these members suggest that we live in anything akin to a so-called free and democratic society when it denies working people the right to freely collectively bargain and the right, in the event that they can't obtain a contract that's fair, to say, "Fine. No contract, no work"? In those places where there is a right to strike left, this government legislates them back to work.

So this government, the Harris Tories, doesn't like trade unions, doesn't like working people and despises poor working people—oh, and the employed. I'm sorry. The style and attitude of this government toward those

among us who don't have jobs—and they're increasing. We'd better take a close look. I don't know how you read the signs out there, but—what was it?—Nortel, 15,000 jobs? Fifteen thousand good-paying jobs gone. A whole bunch of sister- and brother-related industries, again thousands of jobs gone.

Mike Harris's prosperity means the tourist season is starting down in Niagara Falls, if you need a job as a chamber person or as a parking lot attendant for the summer for minimum wage, or for less than minimum wage if you're working in a—I'm going to be corrected, I'm sure, you see, because we pay sub-minimum wage to certain workers: hotel/restaurant workers, waiters, waitresses, bartender types. That's Mike Harris's prosperity down there in Niagara Falls as the tourist season commences. Yes, you can get a seasonal, you can get a part-time, you can get a temporary job for minimum wage. Sorry, friends, Kormos says sarcastically to the Tory caucus, your minimum wage, part-time, temporary jobs aren't job creation in a context where thousands of good-paying, value-added production jobs are being destroyed on a daily, on a weekly, on a monthly basis.

Right where I come from, during the course of Mr Harris's helmsmanship, Union Carbide—gone; Gallaher Paper of Thorold—gone. These are historic companies; these are companies that had been there 60, 70, 80, 90, 100 years. They employed hundreds of working people. Hundreds of families depended upon them. Communities depended upon them.

When the Premier was asked to assist Gallaher Paper, assist those workers, assist those families, assist that community to keep that mill operating, producing paper like it has for 100 years, Mr Harris's attitude was, "Too bad, so sad. Ain't my problem. Besides, I'm ready for the next green."

When Mr Harris was asked to assist when Union Carbide shut down in Welland, destroying hundreds of jobs that had been there for 100 years, undermining hundreds of households, hundreds of families and, yes, a significant part of that small community, his attitude was, "Too bad, so sad. I'm ready for the next green. I'm on the 11th hole. I'm preoccupied. I don't know whether to use my putter or my whatever." It's true.

When we see thousands of jobs being lost in the high-tech sector here in Ontario during the course of the, what, last three months—three months alone, Speaker?—understand that when those jobs are gone, people are unemployed. That means families don't have incomes. That means people are driven into poverty. That means mortgages get foreclosed on. That means people don't pay taxes.

Yet this government is more than prepared to help finance its rich friends and their youngsters to the Ridley Colleges of Ontario and the Havergals and—please help me. What are some of the rest of those high-brow, elite private schools with tuitions of up to 17 grand a year, somebody told me—seventeen thousand bucks a year to send your kid to a private school. These people need help? Give me a break. What? They need some detailing work done on their Mercedes-Benz or on their

Lamborghini or Ferrari or maybe their Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow or the Bentley. People who can afford to send their kids to elite private schools for 17 grand a year—trust me—don't need any help. They're doing fine.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** I'm going to tell you, friends, Kormos said sarcastically to the Tory backbench, because they're not. Let's have no illusions. They're not my friends. The Tory backbenchers aren't workers' friends. They certainly aren't friends of trade unionists or the trade union movement. They're not poor people's friends, they're not women's friends, they're not senior citizens' friends and they're not sick people's friends. But oh, if you're Frank Stronach and you knocked off a gross salary of some \$45 million last year, "Buddy, pal." If you're John Roth from Nortel and you knocked off another X number of millions last year, "Compadre, buddy, let's go golfing. I like you. We're friends." But if you're a trade unionist, you ain't no friend of this government. If you're a worker, this government's no friend to you. If you're a public sector worker, this government is an outright enemy, because it declared war in 1996.

1710

I tell you, the New Democrats were proud to stand with OPSEU and its members and its leadership, Leah Casselman, earlier today outside this Legislature. New Democrats have no qualms about being on the side of the unions, none whatsoever. I have no qualms about taking guidance from Leah Casselman, because she's out there on the shop floor, in the workplace. She's out there fighting to preserve public sector jobs, fighting to preserve a public service.

You guys don't get it. You guys don't understand. It's either that benign level of ignorance, which is so peaceful, so restful, that penultimate level of stupidity that's just so comfortable—it's blissful, that blissful stupidity. You guys don't understand that a professional, quality, independent public service is critical to a democratic society. It's the hallmark of a democratic society. You show me a corrupted, privatized, so-called government support system, and I'll show you a government that isn't democratic. Go one, one, two, two: they work together.

You guys have taken another chunk out of democracy again today with another time allocation motion. The member for Sault Ste Marie got to speak to this time allocation motion. The member for Nickel Belt, Ms Martel, is going to be angry with me again for not saving her any time.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** But I'm here tonight.

**Mr Kormos:** But she's going to be here tonight at 6:45. Folks from Nickel Belt and across the province should be tuning in to their legislative channel, if they get it, to listen to Shelley Martel, MPP for Nickel Belt, debating what, Ms Martel?

**Ms Martel:** The budget bill.

**Mr Kormos:** Debating the budget bill.

Look, I'm telling you this: here's a Web site, friends, here's a Web site. If you want to find out the scoop, go to [www.opseu.org](http://www.opseu.org). Try that Web site out, friends.

We're going to be voting against time allocation motions. We always have.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Further debate?

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** It's certainly a pleasure to rise on this time allocation motion, government motion number 17, as it relates to Bill 25, amending the Public Service Act.

If I were to sum up this particular bill, it's about accountability, and accountability is indeed a hallmark of our government. The Public Service Act is some 122 years old, with literally no changes in the last 40 years.

I was entertained while I listened to the member for Sault Ste Marie and the member for Niagara Centre talking about this time allocation motion and all the things we're doing as a government. I reflect back on their social contract; I believe it was in 1993. Here was a bill that came through with literally no consultation, forced through the Legislature.

I think it's interesting to look back at some of the quotes that were available and came out at the time. One: "We believe your government's policies are incompatible with sound economic and social planning." That came from the OPSEU president, Bob Taylor, and it was in the Toronto Star of March 20, 1993. Not to bore you, but I have just a couple others that I'm sure the member for Niagara Centre would really enjoy hearing and remembering, recalling some of these quotes. "I don't give it much chance at all.... Why didn't they come to us about a social contract months ago?" That came from a very close friend of the New Democratic Party, CUPE president Sid Ryan—the Toronto Star, April 7, 1993.

"They (union representatives) are going to be wondering whether we are taking decisions before they have a chance to come to the table, and to give input ... I want to assure then that 'No, we're not.'" That came from a star in the NDP caucus, still here, who at the time was trade minister, Frances Lankin. It was in the Toronto Star, April 17, 1993.

"If the NDP is truly sincere about the broader goals of the social contract, and not just a straight deficit-cutting exercise, it will take the time to do it right." That came from Gil Hardy, a columnist in the Thomson News Service in the Sault Star. I'm sure the member from Sault Ste Marie would be particularly interested in that one.

I was listening very carefully to some of the comments coming from the opposition ranks, and the member from York South-Weston was claiming that he's been a member here since 1985, but maybe he should practise a little on his memory because he spoke out saying that our government has not appointed a select committee on any particular important issue. I don't know if he can't recall or doesn't want to recall, but in the fall of 1997, I believe September would be quite accurate, we appointed the Hydro select committee. I was privileged to serve on that committee. It did a tremendous amount of work with the concerns of nuclear energy at that time. We reported I believe in about February 1998, if I remember correctly.

Then of course in the throne speech back in early May, or maybe late April—yes, it was back in April—we announced a new select committee for alternative fuel sources. That will be a very valuable select committee to look at alternative fuel sources, particularly in the energy crunch that we're facing in this country with escalating fuel costs. I'd remind the member from York South-Weston that things like that indeed are being done.

Then I was listening to the member for Essex talking about concerns with consultations in small-town Ontario and rural Ontario, and I share his concerns. Just to show him that small-town Ontario, rural Ontario, has not been overlooked by our government with consultations, I would like to point out to him some of the times that we've spent on consultation with the various bills.

In the 36th Parliament, the PC government spent 798 hours and 14 minutes out on hearings. The NDP spent 645 hours; not a bad record. Then of course we have the Liberal government that spent less than 350 hours. That's less than half of what the PC government spent; they spent 349 hours and 45 minutes. That's the Liberal government that here today has been complaining about the hours being spent. I can go through the list: west, Niagara, central, east and north. I could do that for the benefit of the member for Essex. Certainly a tremendous amount of time was spent out on the road in the west, 245 hours; in the east, 165 hours; in the north, 253 hours—the PC government. For example, in the north, while we spent 253 hours, what did the Liberal government of their day, the 34th government, spend? They spent a mere 147 hours. If you look in the west, while we spent 245 hours, they spent 89 hours, with the NDP sort of coming in between.

I also heard the member for St Catharines when the motion was being read shouting out "Disgrace" that we would be bringing forth another time allocation motion, that we're cutting off debate. It's interesting to look at the number of sessional days. I've also heard that member express concern over the fact we didn't come back quite soon enough. Well, if you look at the 36th Parliament, the one that we were in government—431 days; the Liberal government—the 34th—297 days. That would be 134 days less.

1720

In all fairness, they went to the electorate rather early. It was under three years. To this day I really don't know why Mr Peterson would think it was a good idea, but lo and behold, they did. So let's draw a comparison on the three years. In three years, we had 361 days in this Legislature, while the Liberal government in their three-year term had 297 days. It's very obvious that what they're talking about, not being here the number of days or not spending the number of hours in debate, is a bit of a smokescreen they're throwing up in front of us at this point in time.

I'd like to also draw some comparisons with the number of hours, because that's a concern the members from Essex and St Catharines and Niagara Centre were all expressing. Let's have a look at first sessions in each

government. First session, second reading: we spent an average of four hours and 50 minutes; the NDP spent one hour and 28 minutes; while the Liberals spent a whole hour and eight minutes. Listening to them complain and then seeing these factual figures really brings out the truth in the debate here.

We could go on to third reading: in our government, 36th Parliament, we spent two hours and ten minutes. That doesn't sound like an awful lot, but when you start looking at the NDP in the 35th Parliament, it's down to 48 minutes on average for each third reading, and the Liberals, 34th government, coming in at—listen to this—seven minutes was the average they spent on third readings. So I think it's a little unfortunate and a little unfair that they'd be rising in the House today, carrying on with their criticism about a time allocation motion, one that we should get on with, when the record really says everything.

In the last few minutes I have, I want to talk a little bit about the accountability of our government, which definitely relates to Bill 25 and also relates to this time allocation motion. I mentioned that consultation is a hallmark of our government, and as well accountability is a hallmark of our government. Take, for example, education, where we've brought in student testing, teacher testing and a new curriculum. So often when I'm speaking with teachers, they compliment us, particularly on the new curriculum and the standardized report card that has been brought in by our government.

There are things like health care, with a hospital report card, with a triage service that's provided in the emergency ward. We've also held the federal government's feet to the fire in trying to get them to come up to a reasonable level of transfer payments. If they'd only come up to the level of the Mulroney government—that really upsets Liberals when we point out that they're so far below the per cent of that government.

When I think of accountability, I think of the bill that was recently brought in, the Executive Council Amendment Act. It is a bill about accountability and attendance. When the vote was taken, lo and behold—it was brought in by a Liberal member—30% of that party was not here, on an accountability bill. Its really very unfortunate that they don't stand up for what they're saying. Certainly our government is one that has developed a reputation of doing what we said we were going to do.

In summary, so that I can leave 10 minutes for the member from the riding of Peterborough, I'd like to group the amendments. What we're looking at is greater flexibility for improved administration efficiency; the opportunity for more workplace democracy, particularly the OPP civilian employees; clarifying political activity rights and restrictions of staff; the clarification of the government's intent regarding the collection, use and disclosure of information as it relates to the delivery of human resource services.

All in all, I very comfortably support this bill and I very comfortably support this time allocation motion. I look forward to a speedy passage.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I regret that we are dealing once again with yet another time allocation motion, which is a motion that chokes off debate in the Legislative Assembly. It is my observation after a number of years, and I think talking to people who have observed this Parliament for a number of years, that it has been diminished so remarkably by this government that it has become almost irrelevant. That is most unfortunate, not simply for those of us who sit in the opposition or for the combatants who are of a partisan nature in this House, but for the democratic institution that indeed it has been in the past.

It was once a significant institution, in my view. I remember, as a person before I was elected, coming and sitting in the public galleries. Those were the days where you didn't have somebody blocking you at the door and making you get passes and so on. You simply had to sit in the public gallery and watch the debates that took place. And we did sit in those days; the House did sit both in the daytime and sometimes in the evening, particularly on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

If you listened to the debate in those days—I'll say, admittedly, that there are always those who view the past as perhaps being better than the present, but I had a number of students who have gone through the Hansards and read some of the speeches and noted that indeed they were very good speeches in the House in those days. They were more lengthy than they are now, in many cases, so that ideas were able to be elaborated upon. There was a greater detailed analysis of legislation that took place, not only in the House in committee of the whole, because often we went to committee of the whole to deal with clause-by-clause, but also in committees of the Legislature.

I think it was more ecumenical than it is today. Today the strongest person is the party whip. The party whip simply tells the members of the committee what shall happen, and it happens. That's unfortunate, because on all sides I think members have something to contribute: the opposition to concede when the government has made moves that are acceptable and good, and the government members to find problems that might exist in government legislation. But that is virtually gone. It is virtually dictated now by the Premier's office. The speeches we hear in the House tend to be speeches which seem to originate from the government caucus service bureau, and I understand the need for some research for speeches, but they are virtually meaningless, because they can't influence the government or the procedures that take place. That's most unfortunate.

The member for—it used to be Carleton.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Lanark-Carleton.

**Mr Bradley:** Lanark-Carleton now. I can remember some of the speeches, as he may remember, in days gone by that were really remarkable speeches from colleagues he had in government and we had in opposition who could actually deliver a good speech in the House. There were some free exchanges that took place. I lament the fact that I can't hear him for a lengthy period of time in

this House, because he has something to say. He's got some perspective. I don't agree with him on many occasions, but he's got some perspective and some knowledge and some background which I think are useful to share with members of the House.

But the Harris administration, in my view, if I could make one criticism of it as a legislator—and we're going to disagree on legislation from time to time—has in fact so diminished the Legislative Assembly that it's become, as my colleague from York South-Weston said, a virtual rubber stamp of the Premier's office. That's very unfortunate, because not all of the wisdom in this world resides in the Office of the Premier.

Members of this assembly go back to their ridings. We talk to different people who have some good ideas. Sometimes they criticize us, sometimes they agree with us and sometimes they offer some good suggestions. I don't see those reflected in legislation or in changes and alterations to legislation that is put forward. Again, that's lamentable, because that's what the democratic process should in fact be about.

So I say even to those who are listening at home who are Conservative supporters, as I have when I've spoken from time to time to various organizations where I've known good, strong Conservative supporters in the organization, that they are the losers when we see this diminishing of our democratic process. It's not only the changes to the procedural rules of this assembly which have had a major impact in diminishing this House and diminishing those institutions, but it's also other changes, and I'll get to those in a moment.

**1730**

I look at you in the Speaker's chair, Mr Speaker. You are a partisan when you are sitting in your own chair in the House. That's as it should be, because you represent a government on that occasion, and you represent a constituency. When you sit in this chair, you are impartial. I appreciate the fact that you and others who sit in this chair are impartial in that regard. You try to make decisions—often with the assistance of the table, because that's what we do when we sit in those chairs—that are fair-minded, that are reasonable decisions, that accommodate the wishes of all members of the House and not simply the government.

In the rule changes, what happened was they took away your power in some of those instances. Now the minister simply says, "Debate shall take this long on my legislation because I'm going to invoke time allocation." I liked it better when the Speaker could sit in that chair, listen to debate and get a feel for the debate and the flow of the debate and sometimes make a decision the opposition wouldn't like by saying, "There's been enough, and I think we should have the question called," and you accepted that. We could get a feeling that there was something impartial and that it wasn't simply a minister of the government ramming something through, that it was an impartial person in the chair, making a judgment based on fairness for all members of the House.

You don't have that power any more. You have very few powers in your office as Speaker, and I think that's

unfortunate, because we elect Speakers and we look to Speakers with respect in this House, today as never before. To take that power away from you in the chair and vest it in the hands of the government and in the hands of a minister I think is wrong. Again, the role of all of us is diminished when that happens in this assembly.

I also find it lamentable that this House doesn't sit more often. The public thinks this House is sitting when they see the federal House. This year the federal House came back into session in January 2001. The provincial House did not come back until April 19. I suspect most people in this province didn't know that. Some may not even care that was the case.

I understand that there are other roles and responsibilities we have back in our constituencies. I know that. But I was recalling with some observers of the assembly just last night that when the House wasn't in session there was a lot of meaningful committee work that took place. There were some good select committees. The member for Northumberland mentioned there was a select committee, and my friend from York South-Weston said he would stand to be corrected if there were or were not, but I guess what he looked at was a period of time where you took a select committee that had some specific expertise, members who cared about a specific issue. You had them sit down, and I'll tell you, a lot of them buried the partisan hatchets when they got into those committees because they wanted to solve problems.

I had a chance to sit about 1979 or 1980 on the select committee on Hydro affairs. We were dealing with the problems with the boilers at the Pickering nuclear generating station. A lot of good recommendations came out of that. Some information came out before it that never would have come out. A lot of good recommendations came out of that particular committee initiative. There were others: a select committee on education and a select committee on Confederation. Again, the advantage was that the person was actually interested, not simply assigned by the whip, as we all get assigned from time to time. They were people who chose that particular committee as a matter of interest.

The recommendations often found themselves in legislation or government policy. I remember that when I was Minister of the Environment, a committee of the Legislature—it was a minority Parliament at the time—came up with some good recommendations in regard to the acid rain program we were trying to develop. I encouraged members of that committee not to do what the government wanted or what somebody on the government side wanted done. I wanted to see what ideas they could come up with to strengthen the legislation to make it more comprehensive. What came out of that committee were some good recommendations.

You just don't see that now. You walk into a committee and the government members are told what to do by the whip and the opposition members react accordingly. You find there's much more flexibility in the opposition, because in government the whip has much more power than in opposition. I can recall some of your

predecessors on that side of the House who I thought made some excellent contributions to committees because they tried to free themselves of the whip's suggestions and pressure.

There was some good stuff that came out of committees. You just don't see that now. I think those who are no longer in the House, but were in years gone by, look at that and lament that. Members formerly of the government side—I think of a guy like Bruce McCaffrey, who was a pretty independent-minded person on that side. He wouldn't get up and give a government speech, I'll tell you. He'd get up and say what he actually thought, and the opposition people were prepared to concede more to the government because they felt there was more of a free flow of ideas back and forth and they didn't feel that as soon as they said something complimentary the next member would get up and read what they had said in the House out of context.

That happens on both sides of the House, may I say; I understand that. I know that people will phone into a talk show and say, "Why don't you people in opposition ever say anything good about the government?" I tell them, "Because I'll have it read back to me in the Legislature, and besides, that's why you have government members, to say what the government is doing well." I expect that, but I also expect more than that from the members.

I like to see the Premier in the House to be able to ask questions to him. On December 20 of the year 2000, the Premier was present in the House to direct questions to. The next opportunity we had was May 1 of 2001. I think any fair-minded member of this House—and I don't expect government members to get up and condemn the Premier for that—would say, "That's not acceptable for a Premier not to be available in the House to ask questions from December 20 to May 1."

**Mr Wetlaufer:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think the member from St Catharines is treading on some very unparliamentary ground, talking about the absence of another member. The members of this House have been warned time and again by the Speaker. I would ask you to draw your attention to that, please.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is a point of order and I'm listening very carefully to the member for St Catharines. I'll chastise him if I think that he has crossed that line.

**Mr Bradley:** I respect the rules of the House in this regard, which is why I tried to frame what I was saying in such a way that we could recognize that it's about availability to ask questions. I would never draw attention to the fact that someone was in or out of the House on that occasion.

What happens with the strategy of this government is simple. Don't bring the House back into session, bring it back in for the last two months and then jam everything through in the last two months. The problem is, legislation doesn't receive proper consideration. If it takes a longer period of time and the government wins the day, I accept that. I may not like it, but I accept that. But the process is extremely important, and that's where I see the process breaking down.

I see it as well in the changes to the Election Act. The government changed the Election Act for election campaigns to favour a governing party—or a party that has lots of money, one of the two—by shortening the campaign considerably so that those who rely on, shall we say, the door-to-door aspect of campaigning instead of the expensive media-type campaigns would not have an advantage. I think that was not a good move forward. I'm not saying the campaign had to be 60 days as federally it used to be years ago, because communications have changed and transportation has changed.

I noted as well now that the government has allowed larger contributions to political parties and candidates and larger expenditures and exempted some very important aspects of the campaign from any limit at all. We need only look south of the border to see the corrosive effect of private money coming into a campaign. That goes for all political parties. We all raise funds; we all expend funds. I just think it's a bad idea to continue to raise that limit because it makes money a more important component in the campaign.

I think government advertising has gone to an awful length right now. I was watching a program on CBC Sunday night; I think it's called Undercurrents. They interviewed—I thought it was a good idea they had in Britain—a person who reviews all government advertising to determine whether it's partisan or not. They gave examples of the federal government in Canada and the Ontario government in Canada, and on both occasions the person who would arbitrate said that neither one of those would fit the rules. I think there should be a person of that nature so that a Liberal government, an NDP government or a Conservative government cannot be involved in that kind of advertising.

There are some things that are reasonable for governments to provide information on. There are people who go out of this country and don't get private health care insurance. I don't know whether they don't know or not, but that's a reason for a government to let people know you need that when you go out of the country. But some of this blatantly partisan advertising we see, what we've now counted up to \$235 million, is simply unacceptable in a democratic system. It gives too much advantage to a government and it's not a wise expenditure of taxpayers' dollars.

I know you can come back and say, "Well, somebody else said this," and so on. I think we have to get that behind us and start finding rules that will work. Mr Beaubien nodded. I'm not being unkind; I think he recognizes those rules are needed no matter who is in power. So I lament this particular motion. I'll be voting against this motion this afternoon.

1740

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I'm very disillusioned the member for St Catharines is not going to vote for this bill, because it's a good bill. I can't believe that he would not do it.

I also listened very closely to what he was saying. I always get a bit of a kick out of people who have been

around for a long time. "We always did things better back in the old days." I suggest to the member for St Catharines, maybe it's not too bad to look back, but for goodness' sake, let's not go back. It appears that that's what happens.

It's interesting to say, "We debated things for a longer period of time," but you can debate and debate and debate, and never do anything. The difference with this government is that we are a proactive government that puts legislation through, good legislation that is moving this province forward. I can back that up with examples like 825,000 net new jobs. We'll soon hit the 600,000 mark off welfare. I would suggest to you that the type of legislation that we are putting through is legislation that is moving this province forward and making sure that Ontarians, the working families of Ontario, have the jobs and the necessary support services they require.

I am pleased to make a couple of comments about Bill 25 and this time allocation motion. It was interesting when I heard my colleague from Simcoe North make a comment that we had debated this about eight and a half hours and we've had 30 speakers. I would highly suggest to you that if you read through Hansard tomorrow on what's been said about this bill, I would wager it is somewhat repetitious, to say the least. I think we've thrashed it out fairly well.

The bottom line of this bill is that the OPS wants to join the OPPA. I don't know how deep that is for the opposition, but to me it's a fairly simple and good piece of legislation. We've got 2,500 people in this province who are prevented from their democratic right to choose the bargaining unit they feel best represents their interests.

I've heard this afternoon—and again, I was listening very closely—the members of the opposition using the word "democracy." You know, it's like using words like "accountability," "efficiency," "effectiveness." You can use all the words you want to, but I would highly suggest that you realize what those words mean. If you are going to use them, I would suggest that you practise. I believe when the civilian employees of the Ontario Provincial Police who perform their duties such as administration, forensic sciences and other important roles of police business are barred and don't have that democratic right of joining the Ontario Provincial Police Association, something is wrong.

I spoke on this bill a week ago and I made the comment that I had been privileged to attend a couple of retirements for OPP officers over the last month or so. I had the opportunity then to talk to some of the civilian employees who want to join the OPPA and yet are being banned from doing it, being prevented from having their democratic right to choose.

It's a good example of what's happening in the budget bill, where we're now giving tax credits to those who wish to attend independent schools. Certainly the rhetoric from across the way trying to suggest that it is a voucher system that we are funding, I have difficulty accepting some of those comments from honourable people because those comments and facts are not correct.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** Gary, would you like to take a moment on Highway 7?

**Mr Stewart:** Yes, I would like to take a moment on Highway 7, absolutely. That's great. I'm glad you brought it up.

We announced back on January 2 that there were going to be some upgrades to Highway 7. We had support from the minister of the day and the Premier. I had a very open and frank discussion yesterday with the new Minister of Transportation. They realize the priority, the safety factors, and how for some 40 years under previous governments nobody ever got around to trying to even suggest that it be upgraded, to even suggest that it be reviewed, to even take any type of design or whatever. Our government has done that and that highway will be upgraded. I can't be much clearer than that.

I would publicly like to say a very sincere thank you to the minister, who was very open-minded and who I know has the priority of safety for our people in the eastern part of my riding.

I happened to listen to the third party, and I was around in municipal politics during the social contract. They can stand up and say they don't get enough time to debate, they don't get enough time for input, and yet they absolutely had no debate whatsoever on the social contract. I can't understand how people can get up and say something like that when they know full well they did a great deal worse. If I look at what was happening here, there were some quotes regarding it: "We believe our government's policies are incompatible with sound economic and social planning." Do you know who said that? OPSEU President Bob Taylor, Toronto Sun, March 20, 1993.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Which government? Who was the government then?

**Mr Stewart:** The government of the day was the NDP under Bob Rae.

**Interjections:** No.

**Mr Stewart:** Yes, it was.

**Mr O'Toole:** Weren't they a labour government?

**Mr Stewart:** That's the labour government; you're right.

Here's another one. It's kind of another interesting one: "I didn't give it much chance at all. Why didn't they come to us about a social contract months ago?" Do you know who said that? CUPE President Sid Ryan, Toronto Star, April 7. Yet honourable people can stand up in this House and criticize. Somebody told me a long time ago, "If you're going to call the kettle black, make sure yours is very, very shiny."

*Interjection.*

**Mr Stewart:** That's right. I really have difficulty with that.

Anyway, this has been interesting. I don't really call this a debate. It's just trying to stand up and say we'd like to move this province forward. A good example of it is Smart Growth. We'd like to move this province forward. We'd like to do things now that will make this province better for our children of the future.

**The Acting Speaker:** I wanted to draw to the attention of the members that the former Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Lorne Henderson, is in the east gallery and we welcome him.

Mr Baird has moved government notice of motion 17. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members; this will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1751 to 1801.*

**The Acting Speaker:** All those in favour will please rise and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Amott, Ted  
Baird, John R.  
Barrett, Toby  
Beaubien, Marcel  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Clark, Brad  
Clement, Tony  
Coburn, Brian  
Cunningham, Dianne  
DeFaria, Carl  
Ecker, Janet  
Elliott, Brenda  
Flaherty, Jim  
Galt, Doug

Guzzo, Gary J.  
Hardeman, Émile  
Hastings, John  
Hodgson, Chris  
Hudak, Tim  
Johns, Helen  
Klees, Frank  
Marland, Margaret  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Maves, Bart  
Mazzilli, Frank  
Miller, Norm  
Munro, Julia  
Murdoch, Bill

Runciman, Robert W.  
Sampson, Rob  
Snobelen, John  
Spina, Joseph  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Stewart, R. Gary  
Stockwell, Chris  
Tascona, Joseph N.  
Tilson, David  
Tsubouchi, David H.  
Turnbull, David  
Wettlaufer, Wayne  
Wilson, Jim  
Witmer, Elizabeth

Gilchrist, Steve  
Gill, Raminder

Mushinski, Marilyn  
O'Toole, John

Wood, Bob  
Young, David

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Cordiano, Joseph	Lankin, Frances
Bisson, Gilles	Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario
Bountrogianni, Marie	Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley
Boyer, Claudette	Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn
Bradley, James J.	Duncan, Dwight	Peters, Steve
Brown, Michael A.	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Bryant, Michael	Gravelle, Michael	Pupatello, Sandra
Caplan, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramsay, David
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Smitherman, George
Conway, Sean G.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 48; the nays are 32.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

It being well after 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 pm.

*The House adjourned at 1804.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

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Nº 21B

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario  
Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario  
Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Wednesday 30 May 2001

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mercredi 30 mai 2001

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

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Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 30 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 30 mai 2001

*The House met at 1845.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### RESPONSIBLE CHOICES FOR GROWTH AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (2001 BUDGET), 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR DES CHOIX RÉFLÉCHIS FAVORISANT LA CROISSANCE ET LA RESPONSABILISATION (BUDGET DE 2001)

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 29, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 45, An Act to implement measures contained in the 2001 Budget and to amend various statutes / Projet de loi 45, Loi mettant en œuvre des mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 2001 et modifiant diverses lois.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Frank Mazzilli):** Further debate?

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton):** I'm very pleased to rise to speak on the budget bill, Bill 45. I want to speak about accountability. In the 2000 and 2001 budgets, the Minister of Finance announced the largest investments ever made in Ontario's post-secondary education system. Our young people are our future. The government continues to take action to ensure that post-secondary education is accessible to all qualified and willing students. We also want to make sure that opportunities are available in all areas of post-secondary education.

More young people are pursuing higher education than in the past. In the fall of 2003, a record number of students will enter post-secondary institutions when all grade 12 and OAC students will graduate together for the first time. For colleges and universities, this bill increases operating support by a projected \$293 million by the year 2003-04. This is support that is crucially needed to address the pressures that will result from secondary school reform, which changes the high school program from a five-year program to four years, as well as other factors.

We are committed to quality education. The government is addressing the pressures that arise as a result of this double cohort from more students wishing to pursue higher education and from demographic growth in the 18

to 24 age group. We are building on previous measures to ensure that post-secondary education in Ontario is accessible to all qualified and willing students.

The government has already provided more than \$1 billion to the SuperBuild Corp to expand and modernize post-secondary facilities, thereby creating more than 73,000 new spaces for students. Together with its partners, the government will invest a total of \$1.8 billion, the largest post-secondary capital investment in education in more than 30 years.

We are planning ahead and committing ourselves today to the level of operating funding we will provide to post-secondary institutions over the next three years. We must provide for our young people to prepare them for the working world beyond college and university. We must ensure they're able to develop the skills they need to meet the needs of the 21st century.

We understand that to build a strong economy we must invest in our young people. The report of the Investing in Students Task Force has stated, "There is a need to expand the vision"—for the 21st century—"by recognizing the differentiated missions for post-secondary education institutions and supporting them through goals, actions and investment."

The province is providing a one-time investment of \$60 million to create a new and innovative institution. The proposed Ontario Institute of Technology, also known as OIT, in Durham region would focus on preparing students for careers that call for both practical skills and a theoretical background. It would offer both university degrees and college diplomas and give students the choice of moving between college and university courses. Starting in the years 2003-04, in time for the double cohort that is at that time entering post-secondary education, OIT will provide a range of new market-driven programs in areas such as health science, advanced manufacturing, business and information technology, and nuclear technology and safety.

OIT is another example of developing partnerships. Along with the provincial investment, Durham and its community partners would be responsible for funding the additional capital required and other start-up costs associated with the establishment of the institution. The province's capital funding will be used to build a new facility on Durham's current campus to include instructional facilities for 6,500 students, furniture, equipment, information technology and a library.

To respond to the critical shortage in skilled trades that threatens Ontario's ability to maintain a competitive position in the global economy, the province is com-

mitting \$33 million annually by the years 2004-05 to double the entrance to apprenticeship programs. This initiative will build on the apprenticeship reforms that have already been put in place, including the expansion of the Ontario youth apprenticeship program and introduction of the apprenticeship innovation fund announced in the year 2000.

This budget also provides an additional \$50 million over five years to renew equipment and facilities in colleges for apprenticeship through the apprenticeship enhancement fund.

With these investments, we will provide our young people with certainty for the future. With these investments in post-secondary education, we will ensure there will be a place for Ontario's young people in post-secondary institutions. By doing this, we are taking the necessary steps to ensure a bright and vibrant future for our economy and our province.

I also want to talk about some of the tax measures that are found in Bill 45. This is designed to continue prosperity for Ontarians. This bill is about responsible choices and, in particular, responsible choices in support of growth that enables Ontario to remain strong and competitive. Growth is essential to provide continued support for health care, education and other priority services. In order to maintain growth, taxes must be competitive. Barriers to economic growth, such as high taxes, threaten jobs, our standard of living and future employment opportunities. We are honouring our tax cut pledges and, in doing so, strengthening our economy. Economic strength allows us to preserve the exceptional quality of life that Ontarians deserve and that encourages others to make Ontario their place to live, work and raise a family.

Under previous governments, high taxes and big government were the order of the day, and look at the results. From January 1990 to May 1995, Ontario lost 89,000 jobs, while the rest of Canada created 320,000 jobs. In contrast, since our government's first throne speech, about half of the new jobs created in Canada have been in the province of Ontario. In fact, 846,500 net new jobs have been created in Ontario since 1995. Ontario's economy has grown by almost 25%. As we said before, the debate is over. Tax cuts create jobs and growth.

Ontario's job growth has been exceptional since tax cuts were first announced by this government. Ontario's total employment has grown 16% compared to only 10.6% in the rest of Canada and 8.5% in the United States. In the five years prior to tax cuts, real GDP per person fell in Ontario. In the five years since tax cuts, real GDP per person has risen about 16%, well in excess of the increase in the rest of Canada or the average of the industrialized countries.

Growth has enabled us to preserve and build on our successes to not only create jobs, but increase investments in the things that are important to the people of this province, namely, to produce three consecutive balanced budgets, something that no other Ontario government has done in nearly 100 years, and to make the largest

contribution toward paying down the debt—a figure of \$3 billion. And here is more proof of the impact of tax cuts on growth and jobs: Ontario experienced its best two consecutive years of growth since the 1980s, when the economy grew by 11.9% in both 1999 and 2000. Consensus for real GDP growth in 2001 is 2.3% and 3.6% in 2002, and the job growth is expected to continue in 2001 and to accelerate in 2002.

As our finance minister said in his budget speech earlier this month, "Tax cuts helped make us leaders and they will help to keep us leaders." Every province in Canada is following our tax cut lead, and to our credit, so is the highest government in the land. But the federal government could do a lot more for the 735,000 lower-income earners who, we've been told, would be able to keep their income tax money but who would still pay income tax to the government of Canada.

Bill 45, if passed, would cement another Mike Harris government commitment by completing the 20% personal income tax cut promised in the year 1999. This promise could benefit an extremely high number of people: 95% of Ontario taxpayers, including virtually everyone in the province who earns less than \$100,000 a year, would see Ontario tax savings of at least 20%. What this would mean for an individual family with two working parents and two children and an income of \$60,000 is \$2,345 less paid in Ontario personal income tax.

We are proud of our efforts over the past few years to return money to all Ontario taxpayers and in particular to those with lower incomes; however, there are other Ontario taxpayers who deserve some relief on their pay stubs and when filling out their income tax returns. Bill 45 says it's time to also look at how much tax is paid by the middle-class families in Ontario. The personal income surtax impacts Ontario taxpayers with incomes of at least \$54,000. These are not rich people by any means. We propose in this bill to take the first step toward eliminating this surtax burden on 340,000 middle class families, by raising the surtax threshold so that no one earning less than \$70,000 would pay the surtax and the remaining surtax payers would pay less surtax. The surtax is two-tiered and it is calculated as a percentage of basic Ontario tax in excess of specified amounts; in other words, thresholds. Starting in the year 2001, the surtax thresholds are indexed to inflation to ensure that non-surtax payers whose incomes rise at the rate of inflation will not become surtax payers.

We're not only looking at eliminating the tax for some, but also making sure that no one is added to the ranks simply due to inflation. On January 1, 2003, the first tier of the Ontario surtax would be eliminated and Ontario surtax would be calculated as 56% of basic Ontario tax in excess of \$4,491, indexed after the year 2001. This means that a single-earner couple with two children and employment income of up to \$73,540 would not pay any surtax. By raising the level at which the surtax would be payable, we would be giving more people of this province more money to spend and invest.

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It's worth repeating here that tax dollars belong to the hard-working families in this province, not the government.

Since we started cutting taxes, tax revenues have increased by more than \$15 billion and business investment has increased by 66%. Tax cuts since 1995 will provide more than \$16 billion in benefits to people and businesses in Ontario when fully implemented. Tax cuts like the personal income tax surtax that Bill 45 proposes to eliminate, or begin to eliminate, allows Ontarians to keep more of their income and invest their money however they want. This helps the economy to grow and the result is growth we can all enjoy.

As I continue here, I want to speak also on health care. Let the record be clear that health care is one of this government's top spending priorities. We have invested as no other government before in this vital area. This year alone we are increasing base health operating spending by \$1.2 billion or 5.4%. In fact, we have increased our investment in health care by almost \$6 billion since we came to office. But these unprecedented increases in health care spending are simply not sustainable. We must make the system work better and more efficiently.

One of the first steps in health care reform is accountability. The people of Ontario have a right to know they are getting value for the money they invest in health care. They must know that not one penny is misspent. That is the responsible thing to do. For too long in this province we have rewarded poor performance by funding hospital deficits each year. Under this system, there is no incentive to achieve better results. That is why we intend to encourage all hospitals to strive for excellence and efficiency. We must be accountable for every dollar of taxpayer money we spend, whether it goes to a hospital, a public school, a university or any other transfer partner in the broader public sector.

I would like to take this moment to elaborate a little more on this government's views on accountability. "Accountability" is a word the general public frequently hears from politicians at every level, perhaps a little too frequently, as the word can sometimes lose its true meaning, particularly from the federal Liberals whose actions do not always follow their intentions. Last year we witnessed the flagrant lack of accountability at the federal department, Human Resources Development Canada. Hundreds of millions of dollars were spent with no solid accountability and with no solid responsibility. In fact, the federal Auditor General recently criticized the fact that most senior executives at Human Resources Development Canada received pay bonuses.

Let me define the Ontario government's definition of "accountability." Accountability is the way in which organizations and their workers must answer to and take responsibility for their performance to those who pay for and use their services. Those people are the taxpayers of Ontario. Without accountability, faith and respect in all government institutions would not exist. We solidly believe that tax dollars belong to the hard-working people

of Ontario and not the government. Taxpayer citizens and users of government services expect, in fact demand, that the government deliver quality services in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

The government has improved and will continue improving its own ability to deliver value-for-money services directly to the public, but the time has come to ensure its transfer partners, who deliver many government programs, do the same. More than 80% of program and capital spending is in the form of transfer payments that go to our transfer partners, which include hospitals, schools and universities. These organizations, like the government of Ontario, are accountable to the taxpayers of this province and to others who fund them.

The proposed Public Sector Accountability Act that our government would bring in would require all major public sector organizations that receive taxpayer dollars from our government to do the following: prepare and deliver a yearly balanced budget; initiate best practices by measuring performance against goals and reporting publicly on progress made; promote a stronger focus on results and quality service; prepare a plan on identified objectives and to provide information on results and the quality of service achieved.

The Public Sector Accountability Act would require major public sector organizations to prepare an annual report. They would be required to make their annual report, including their audited financial statements and their business plan, available to the government, but more importantly, they must also be made available to the public. That is accountability to the taxpayers who fund them and the people who rely on their services.

But let me be perfectly clear: while we believe that all public organizations should be accountable, it is the intention of the government that the requirements of this bill initially would apply only to major organizations. The bill would permit regulations to be made to ensure that they would not apply to every small public organization in the province. It must be emphasized that accountability does not end when the books are balanced. True accountability goes far beyond the numbers. The purpose of this proposed act is to move and improve the broader public sector, not shame and blame. We expect our transfer partners to identify and demonstrate areas where they excel and cite areas where there is need for improvement.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** Thank you, Speaker, and I certainly congratulate you on your time in the chair.

I did want to comment on the speech by the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton. He said in his remarks that it was important to invest in young people. I agree with those remarks and I wonder if the member would care to explain that. I would quote former education minister Dave Johnson, May 4, 1999, where he said, "I ... assure the member opposite that over \$15 billion will be spent this year for all school" and education programming in this province.

Yet, when you look at the 2001 budget—I just happen to have it here—and listen to the comments of the current education minister, Janet Ecker, the province is spending \$13.8 billion. In two years, what happened to \$1.2 billion? Where did that money go? There's some fiction here that somehow the government is spending more on children and education, and it's a direct contradiction from one education minister to her predecessor. So I would ask the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford to account for \$1.2 billion.

I would also ask the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford to account for the fact that in the budgetary priorities of the current provincial government, when it comes to capital expenditure for our schools, we fund to the tune of \$16 million capital for the entire province of Ontario, yet a mere five years ago that was over \$500 million. Where did that money go?

I think the evidence shows, by their own budgetary document, education is short—I would say, when you adjust for inflation and enrolment growth a much greater amount—at least \$1.7 billion. I ask the member to account for that.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford started off his remarks by saying he wanted to focus on accountability and proceeded to talk about several government programs and I want to focus on two of those. First, with respect to post-secondary education, it seems to me that the government has a responsibility to be accountable to ensure that kids who come from low- and middle-income families can actually have post-secondary education in this province. But under policies of this government, which have allowed tuition increases of 60%, too many of our young people will never have that opportunity because they can't afford to incur that kind of debt at the end of their studies because they have no guarantee to get a job. Their families, low- and middle-income in particular, do not have the kinds of finances required to deal with those kinds of tuition costs and other ancillary costs. Where's the government's accountability?

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This is the government that deregulated programs: medical schools, engineering, any number of other programs. We see now that tuition alone for the first year of medical school at U of T this year was \$14,000. There aren't very many students from my part of the world who can afford that kind of tuition, never mind the cost of the ancillary services.

This is a government that essentially steals the federal money that comes through the millennium fund that was supposed to go to the students who were in the greatest amount of debt—

**Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: That's not parliamentary at all.

**The Acting Speaker:** That's not a point of order.

Continue, member for Nickel Belt.

**Ms Martel:** It's a government that steals money that was directed to the students who have the greatest debt load. The government steals that because they take that

money and subsidize a program that the province has. That money doesn't go back into post-secondary education. Where's the government's accountability?

Finally, with respect to health care, I just point out the questions we've been raising on community care access centres. Ours has a \$1.8-million deficit; the government refuses to fund that. Where's the government's accountability to provide home care services for people who need them?

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** I would point out that I believe the member for Nickel Belt was accusing a member or in fact the minister of lying. I do believe that's out of order and I would like to make a point of order of that.

The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, I believe, focused on a very important part of Bill 45: the accountability mechanism.

I just want to go back to one point in the very limited time. To the member for London-Fanshawe, I want to commend that you're sitting in the chair and I want to put that on the record, because it really breaks all rules and traditions. You sit here every day, and basically I can hardly hear what you're saying. I want that on the record too. You're a good friend, but maybe it'll just show you the importance of respect and decorum in the House. I know my time is limited, otherwise you would rule me out of order.

On accountability, I would think that if you looked at Minister Flaherty's speech, you would say that people want a value-for-money audit process. They also want some public sector accountability. In fact, there's nothing negative about that. I can't wait for Erik Peters, our auditor, to go in and objectively look at measurable outcomes and make sure that every single taxpayer dollar is being spent appropriately and wisely and efficiently and make recommendations, as he was given to do, about where further investments arguably should be made. I look forward to that mechanism.

Today, when we've increased funding in health care by some 30% since 1995, I would have said, "I'll give you the cheque, but what am I getting for it?" Not that I'm accusing anyone in the system, but we've been flushing money through there like opening up some boom on a dam. I'm not sure exactly what I saw except—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The member's time has expired. Comments and questions? The Chair recognizes the member for Renfrew-Pembroke.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** I just want to say that I think the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford makes a good point about accountability. I don't think—I hope there isn't a member in the Legislature or beyond who would take issue with the notion that governments in democratic societies have a right to show taxpayers that there is a reasonable and, hopefully, rigorous standard of accountability, particularly in financial administration, for the monies provided to governments by hard-working men and women. I think the rhetoric is entirely laudable.

The problem I have, not just today or yesterday, but quite frankly it's a problem I've had for some time, and

to be ecumenical about it, it certainly is a difficulty that we face in government: what about the practical reality? I think, for example, of a situation just a couple of years ago when it was clearly demonstrated that there was a serious dereliction of duties at the Ministry of Finance around the protection of confidential financial information at the Province of Ontario Savings Office. As far as I can tell, nothing was done. Nothing was done. That's just one example that I could cite.

As energy critic for the Liberal Party, I am involved with a number of other members in trying to make some sense out of the very complicated issues around electricity policy, and they're not easy. But I ask this Legislature on this account not to think about the behaviour of transfer partners, like the colleges and universities and school boards and hospitals, very important as they are. I ask us, as a collective assembly, do we really think we are exacting any kind of meaningful accountability on behalf of Her Majesty's taxpayers in Ontario for the multi-billion-dollar activities at Ontario Hydro and its successor companies? If you can answer that question in the positive, you are more optimistic than I am.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. And I'm sorry I missed the Nipissing part of your riding.

The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton has two minutes.

**Mr Tascona:** I want to thank all the members for their comments: the members for Don Valley East, Nickel Belt, Durham, and Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

The last member's comments, which I think were echoed by the member for Nickel Belt also, in terms of accountability: certainly that's what taxpayers expect; that's what they demand. The point is well taken with respect to there being rigorous standards of accountability especially in financial administration; also to deal with that being a balanced budget, what's expected in terms of what money is given to them from the province, and to provide quality services and to deal with what the member says about practical realities. One thing the government has dealt with is those practical realities.

When you talk about what the member for Don Valley East was talking about, education funding, the bottom line, the practical reality in terms of the funding formula that the province has brought out with respect to education, where it's based on every student across the province getting the same amount of funding wherever they are for their education, is that obviously in my riding, which is a growth riding, it has benefited them significantly. But I think that's fairness in terms of how education funds are distributed.

The bottom line is that there's more money going into the classroom today than there ever has been in the history of this province—into the classroom. Classroom spending has increased significantly. That's where parents expect the money to go to benefit their children. So I'd say that the focus of this budget is obviously to keep the economy rolling in terms of sound fiscal management, balanced budgets that we have in paying down our debt, but also to put the money in place where it's needed in education and health care.

### The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

**Mr Conway:** I'm pleased to rise tonight to address some remarks to the budget bill, Bill 45, standing in the name of the Minister of Finance. I want to restrict my comments tonight to two areas: first to health care and, second, to the budget provision providing income tax credits from the province of Ontario to the parents of children attending private schools.

Let me begin with some remarks about health care. The previous speaker has just indicated that the government of Ontario is spending more money this year in health care than it has in previous years. I don't want to get into a detailed discussion about that, except that I want to make this one point: few things that the Harris government has done have been more important in health care than a very radical restructuring of the hospital sector. As a result of that restructuring, something like 7,000 hospital beds have been taken out of the system in the last five or six years and substantial reconfigurations are occurring throughout much of the province with respect to the remaining hospital sector.

I simply want to make the point very quickly tonight that as I look across the capital costs of the Health Services Restructuring Commission's work, I am finding, two and three years after those directives were issued, that the cost overruns are anywhere between four and five and six times the original estimates. If one goes into communities, whether it be Sarnia, Brantford, Thunder Bay, Pembroke, Sudbury, Toronto or Ottawa, you will find that we're going to be spending hundreds of millions of dollars more than we had planned, because the original estimates were so woefully inaccurate.

So I say to my friend from Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton, yes, we may be spending more money, but make no mistake about it: the original architecture for hospital restructuring was, we are now finding out, grossly wrong and inaccurate. If community X was expecting to spend \$30 million or \$40 million to reconfigure its hospitals, and now the reality is that the cost is \$150 million, I ask this Legislature, what have we done? I can tell you, and my friends on both sides of the aisle will know this, that in many of the affected communities we are dealing with increasingly incredulous taxpayers and constituents who want to know, how did this happen? More money? Yes. But in my community, for example, hospital restructuring that was supposed to cost something in the neighbourhood of \$5 million is going to cost \$25 million, minimum. Those are real dollars. I'm not here to cast blame; I'm here to report that reality. More money? Yes. But against what kind of original projection, with what kind of unintended consequence? And dare I raise the word of the hour, "accountability"? If I were asking today, "From whom do I exact the accountability for a commitment that turns out to have been understated by tens of millions, hundreds of millions of dollars?"—where do I go? To whom do I say, "Are you responsible?" If so, to what end and with what effect? Tough, hard questions in a democratic society. More money? Yes. But we have an obligation, surely, to ask ourselves, where is it going?

**1920**

Today, most of us across the province are as MPPs being besieged with phone calls to our constituency offices from families of individuals, frail elderly in the main, who are wondering what on earth is happening; if more money is being spent by the Dominion and the Ontario governments for health care, what explains the fact that very important home care and homemaking services are being taken away? I spoke today to the family of an 84-year-old woman in my constituency. This woman is 84, she has Alzheimer's, she's got a broken hip and she's being sustained in her own home in a small community in the Ottawa Valley, and the family is pitching in to a very real and great extent. I am simply saying to the Legislature that I've spoken to the family, I've spoken to the providers, and they are asking me what is going on. We have, as a provincial government, supported the community care access centre over the last number of years to help these individuals be sustained with a good quality of life and a good quality of care in their home setting. They read the Ottawa and Pembroke and Renfrew papers and see governments spending more money, and they don't understand how an 84-year-old woman with Alzheimer's and a broken hip is going to be substantially reduced in the level of homemaking and home support.

There's a letter in today's Renfrew Mercury talking about a daughter in Kanata who is talking about her elderly mother living in my constituency, who has had and who requires certain kinds of homemaking supports to be kept where she wants to be, in her own home. Now she's being told and the family is being told, "It's got to go. You're going to have to make alternate arrangements." I say to this Legislature, after we as a government and as a Legislature said, "We are going to reduce the hospital sector. We are going to deinstitutionalize because we can do a better job in many of these areas by providing home and community-based care," we are now breaking faith with that commitment and the tens of thousands of frail elderly who expect us to keep faith with that kind of a commitment.

One of my community newspapers, the Renfrew Mercury, of yesterday editorializes, "Seniors short-changed by community care access centre changes." I'm not going to read the whole editorial, but it is a very critical editorial as to these cutbacks that are occurring at all of these CCACs, including the Renfrew county community care access centre. The letters have gone out; it's very clear. According to the Renfrew county community care access centre, they are saying that because of government funding cuts, they, the Renfrew county community care access centre, are going to have to, for budgetary constraint purposes, reduce—and reduce significantly—the level of home care and home support services to the hundreds, potentially thousands, of constituents in my area who depend on those services.

The Renfrew Mercury editorial implores my constituents—let me just quote from the last line of the Renfrew Mercury editorial, May 29, 2001: "Pick up your pens and

bullhorns and let Queen's Park know that the way it is treating Renfrew county's seniors is unacceptable." I dare say that if I go to Listowel or Petrolia or Goderich or Nickel Belt, I'm going to find an awful lot of community opinion that's going to support that editorial position.

Make no mistake about it: where are these people going to go? These frail elderly, many of whom are very, very vulnerable, are almost certainly, without these community and home supports, going to be back in the institutional setting. Is that what we want? That's not the program we advertised. I'm not making this up. I am imagining, because I've been talking to these people in the last two or three days, that families, good people, many of them good supporters of the current government, are absolutely beside themselves trying to understand, how is it possible, with what they've read in the newspapers about increased government funding, that this is happening? That's a good question. If you read the material that's being provided to families from the community care access centres, as a number of honourable members have made plain in question period exchanges over the last few days, the reason seems clear: the Ontario government is not providing the same level of funding for many of these community care access centres that they've had before and that they feel, given the burgeoning caseload, they're going to require if they're going to adequately meet this health care challenge in their community.

I want to just cite something that my colleague Mrs McLeod mentioned earlier this afternoon. She was at a meeting with a number of people associated with this policy area, and she said something to me that I thought was very interesting. According to a number of people closely associated with home care and community-based care, there are a goodly number of community care access centres which are spending up to 70% of their total budget on acute care for people just discharged from hospitals—70% of the entire budget of a goodly number of these community care access centres being spent on people who are just out of hospital. Is it any wonder, then, that there is less and less money for the frail elderly, who may require home and community supports? Seventy per cent of the budget going to provide acute care services for people just discharged from hospitals.

My colleagues on both sides of the aisle talk about privatization and what it might mean in health care. I submit to this House that what is going on in Renfrew county and elsewhere with respect to the underfunding of community care access centres for the good and important work that they must provide to the frail elderly with respect to home support and homemaking represents the most vicious kind of privatization imaginable, and we should, as a collective, demand a change of policy. Privatization of a truly upsetting kind—I can't imagine anything worse than this. I've spoken as recently as late this afternoon with families who have been given about 72 hours' notice. "What are we going to do? My mother is 84. She's got Alzheimer's. She's had a broken hip. What do we do? We as a family are there for many, many

hours a day, but we cannot be there 24 hours a day." They're simply told, "Make other arrangements, and make them fast."

I say on behalf of the frail elderly and the thousands of family members that I represent who are at this moment deeply troubled, let this government, with the support of the Legislature, address this issue, because if we don't address it soon and directly—and yes, there may very well be some additional costs. I say to you, Mr Speaker, and this Legislature, make no mistake about what the most significant expenditure item is in this 2001 Ontario provincial budget. It is, fully matured, a \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut. If we can find \$2.2 billion over the next few years to reduce the corporate tax rate in Ontario, lower than any other Canadian province or, I understand, virtually any other American state, then surely we can find adequate resources to properly and humanely provide for the frail elderly in Renfrew county and every other county and city and territory in this province in a way that we promised to do when we embarked upon deinstitutionalization years ago.

**1930**

A second observation I want to make tonight concerns another important provision of Bill 45, the so-called provincial tax credit for private schools. I understand that this is a deeply difficult issue for probably all of us. I have been listening over the last number of days to a number of my good friends on the treasury bench saying to me, "Well, Conway, what are your opinions?"

I'm going to take a moment tonight to express them. They're going to fall into two categories. The first, which are really of secondary importance, are what I would call the process or procedural ones. Far more important are my substantive concerns. Let me be clear: I am deeply opposed to this initiative, notwithstanding the good and important work that I understand private schools do in Ontario. I've got private schools in my own constituency. I have visited those schools. I understand the good work they do and the commitment that those families and organizations have to support those private schools.

But I want to say, has the political class learned nothing from the experiences of the 1980s and 1990s? I say to you, Mr Speaker, and every member in this House, that if we as individuals or members of political parties intend to make this kind of significant change in public policy, affecting something so basic to our community as the public schools, we are duty bound, we are honour bound, to say before a general election that this is our policy. I don't mean just for the government; this equally applies to the opposition parties.

That we would imagine today a government led by my neighbour from Nipissing announcing in this 2001 budget a policy to provide tax credits to the parents of kids going to private schools when Mr Harris so plainly indicated that that was not his policy, when his minister so clearly indicated that that was not her policy—how dare we? How dare we in this democratic age, in this age of the charter, when we have lived through what we lived through with the Meech Lake accord and, yes, the

separate school extension of 1984 and all that came with that?

I say to this Legislature, if the Premier didn't learn anything from the 1980s, I certainly did. If any member of this Legislature, individually or collectively, wants to do this, then I say, you stand up before your electorate and tell them that that is your intention. To say that this is not your policy and then, after winning election on those grounds, to say, "My policy has changed," is another breach of faith and an insult to accountability in a democratic society.

It is no secret, it is absolutely no secret, that my friend Monte Kwinter from the beginning has said he believes there should be support for the Jewish schools. He has been consistent since the day he was elected, and I respect that. I respect it indeed. I am a product of the Roman Catholic separate schools, and some would say, "Well, you ought to talk," and I will talk, for two reasons.

This is a walk I have walked. I have walked this walk in a way that has taught me some important lessons. It was my obligation to be the minister to give effect to the promise Bill Davis made that fateful day in June 1984. It was a policy that my party and the New Democratic Party had espoused for years. The dramatic reversal in 1984 came from Mr Davis, a man for whom I have a great respect but with whom I differed on a number of occasions. I want this House to understand that when that bill of mine, Bill 30, the Peterson government separate school act, supported by virtually everyone here, with, quite frankly, due regard to my friend Norm Sterling, who was opposed—it was taken to the Supreme Court of Canada, and that highest court said in June 1987 that this was a duty that the Ontario government had had for so many decades to complete the Confederation bargain. The Supreme Court, in a unanimous verdict, seven to nothing, said that the government of Ontario was obligated to do this to keep faith with the arrangements made in the middle of the 19th century.

I simply want to say that, on substantive grounds, Ontario in 2001 is a province that is increasingly multi-faith and multicultural. The Ontario Ministry of Finance last summer published demographic projections for the next 25 years, and I ask honourable members, when they look at the budget documents from finance, to look at these demographic projections.

Let me summarize very briefly: in the next 25 to 30 years, we are told by finance, this province will grow by nearly 3.8 million people. Of that 3.8 million, 75% of that growth is going to come from immigration, and most of that immigration is apparently going to come from South Asia and Latin and South America. Seventy-five per cent of 3.8 million new Ontarians are going to come to us happily through immigration.

We all know the central role that public schools have to integrate this wonderful group of men and women from across the globe. I think Ontarians, of whatever political stripe, have in the main done a very good job in trying over the decades to integrate and balance. It's not been perfect and there have been very controversial

flashpoints, but I beg this Legislature to think seriously against the backdrop of these demographic projections about what we will do if this incentive to fracture the public schools is supported. We are looking for the next 25 and 30 years at a dramatically different kind of Ontario than I knew when I was growing up in the Ottawa Valley in the 1940s and 1950s. Let me say, as someone who was Minister of Education, \$300 million projection? If you believe that, you believe in the tooth fairy. This is going to be a much more costly undertaking than you can imagine, and I'm not even going to talk about the capital implications of this.

However well-intentioned was the instinct, I say to you, Mr Flaherty, your tax credit for private schools is wrong policy. It is potentially destructive policy. It will be damaging to people who imagine it to be a benefit and, most importantly, it will be a very serious and painful fracture for the public schools on which foundation we must stand proudly if we are going to integrate these 2.5 million to 3 million new Canadians.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

**Ms Martel:** I enjoyed listening to the comments made by the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. I especially appreciated him providing the historical and legal context for the full funding of Catholic schools, because I am a product of the Catholic school system as well. Our family paid for grades 11, 12 and 13 when I attended Catholic school because funding hadn't been extended.

But the legal context for that extension of funding is completely different from what the government proposes to do today. I appreciate that my colleague from the Liberal Party made that clear. The government has no obligation, as it did in the period 1974 to 1987, to use public money to support the private school system. I have heard, when we have asked questions to the government about this, some members in the back talking about the Catholic system. There is a very clear distinction between what the government was obliged to do by law because of the constitutional right that Catholics had in that case and what this government proposes to do today, and I too am very concerned about how divisive this road will be that the government wants to take us down.

Secondly, I want to reinforce what the member said with respect to health care funding. In our community we are getting hit twice as well. We are a community that has had a forced restructuring of our hospital system to go from three hospitals down to one. We had an original cost estimate for the new hospital of \$143 million. It's up to \$206 million. We had an original estimate from the Health Services Restructuring Commission for \$9 million worth of equipment for the new hospital. The real equipment needs are now up to \$74 million. Our community is facing a serious financial crisis with respect to paying for this hospital restructuring that has been forced on us. This government refuses to recognize that crisis and instead will force our community somehow to try and fund that too.

## 1940

**Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe):** It's certainly my pleasure to respond to the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

Let me just start by saying that in this budget we recognize and are committed to publicly funded education to the tune of over \$13 billion. If we cannot provide public education in this province for \$13.8 billion, I suspect at some point we have a very big difficulty. So I believe that demand has been met with an increase of \$360 million in this last budget.

When we hear the opposition complain that a tax credit is somehow going to bring down a fully funded public school education system that's funded to the tune of \$13.8 billion, that certainly causes me some concern. What was in the budget was a small tax credit of 10% in the first year, 20% in the second year, as we heard from the finance minister today. The opposition somehow wants to disregard that.

Many religious schools, and there are some in my riding, have family caps of \$4,000 to \$5,000—as many kids as you can send to that school from one family capped under one amount, and some may charge \$2,000. We are not talking about rich people here. The opposition continually wants to talk about Upper Canada College, where the fees are \$22,000 and \$23,000. You know why? They love to fearmonger. A \$7,000 maximum tuition with a maximum of \$3,500, 50%, after five years will not in any way, shape or form take money out of public education. So I ask Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals to stop the fearmongering.

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** It's always interesting to listen to the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

This tax credit for the private schools is a step backwards for our education system. Also, the \$2.2 billion that will be awarded to the corporations—let me tell you, with this \$2.2 billion we could have got MRI equipment at the Hawkesbury hospital, at the Montfort Hospital, at the Cornwall hospital, at the Glengarry hospital. We could have got a lot more of that MRI equipment. In Ottawa at the present time we have a waiting list of over 7,000 people.

Let me tell you, lately the health care system has been getting a blow. When I say a blow, I've got this gentleman, Stéphane Wathier from Rockland. Last week his back seized up. He went to the doctor at the hospital. The doctor said, "No way I could see that on the X-ray. You have to go for an MRI." The only place he could go is over to the Hull side because they have the Ottawa Valley MRI, but it's going to cost him \$775. He goes back to the Civic Hospital and Dr Boulanger over there looked at the X-ray. Even though the nurse said, "We have no money at the present time to proceed with the urgent operation," the doctor said, "I have to operate on him immediately." He got the operation on that same day; otherwise this guy could have been paralyzed for the rest of his life. Another member in the same room is still waiting for an MRI, just to show you.

Also, the gentleman that I spoke about yesterday, Marc Pilon from Plantagenet: at the present time he was under assistance at the Gamma lab at the Ottawa Hospital. No way he could continue. It is going to cost him \$480 a week now for physiotherapy.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** It's a pleasure to be able to respond to the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. It was interesting that this particular member zeroed in on bed closures that our government may have made. I don't remember that many bed closures on the part of our government, but I know that close to 10,000 beds were closed during that lost decade and I know that the NDP was pretty upset back in the late 1980s when the Liberal government was closing a large number of beds.

It was interesting to hear the member talk about the overruns of hospitals. I'd like him to know that the new hospital in west Northumberland with the Northumberland Health Care Corp is coming in on target, on budget and on time. So maybe he can add that to his roll and talk about hospitals and where they're coming in. But he should also be aware that the costs for those hospitals are coming from SuperBuild, not from the operational dollars we're putting in, like the \$1.2-billion increase we're putting in this year and the \$6-billion increase we've put in since we took office back in 1995.

I'd like to ask him how many hospitals and how many long-term-care beds were built during their watch? I understand there were no long-term-care beds built during their watch, but I wonder how many hospitals were built during his watch. Maybe he can tell us. I'd like to know when he goes to Ottawa and back to his home riding how often he talks to his federal Liberal cousins about their funding of health care. Maybe, just maybe, he and Allan Rock could consider getting the federal transfer payments up to the level they were when Brian Mulroney left office. That would be a tremendous assistance to Ontario, if we got back to an 18% transfer payment.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr Galt:** I know it's kind of an insult to you to throw that one out, but would it ever help health care here in Ontario if we got back to 18% transfer payments.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr Conway:** I want to address the comments of the member from London-Fanshawe, because he made some lively responses to my remarks, particularly about the education issue. I want to say to the member from London-Fanshawe and to the House generally that if it is his intention and if it is the intention of any party to support private schools, through this mechanism or any other, I say to him and to the group that we are honour-bound to say to the general electorate before the votes are cast, "This is our policy. On this rock I will stand and on this measure I will be judged."

I just can't believe that the political class in 2001 thinks it can get away with this. Who the hell do we think we are? Have we learned nothing from the last 20 years? We've just heard a paean of praise from our friend

Tascona about accountability. I've heard lecture after lecture about participatory democracy, about the need for referenda. And we do what with something as vital and as central as the public schools? Knowing that the Minister of Education has one set of views, written about just weeks or months ago, and knowing what my friend the member from Nipissing has said on the platform and in correspondence, we get what? We get this budget, that represents a dramatic change of government policy without notice, without consultation.

Who do we think we are? If you want to do this, I say to my friend from Fanshawe and anybody else on either side of this House, stand individually and stand collectively before the general electorate and say, "Elect me and I will do this." Get a sanction for what it is you want to do. Don't try to do at night through the back door what you would not dare do at high noon through the front door.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Galt:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak on Bill 45, a budget bill and a bill about responsible choices. The responsible choices the Minister of Finance and our Premier made in that budget were certainly very tough choices. I'd like to compliment the Minister of Finance for just an excellent budget that he brought in for the year 2001-02 and also Premier Mike Harris, who similarly had a lot of input into this particular budget. I think this is one of the better budgets we've seen during our first two years in office. I'm particularly impressed with this. I know the tough choices being made by the Premier and by the Minister of Finance were with the best of intentions for the residents of Ontario.

Just looking at a few of these, one is debt reduction. We know that debt reduction in Ontario is going to ensure stability and economic security for this province. That has become a hallmark of this government. Right from 1995, it has been getting the budget balanced so dollars could be there for the important social programs we've grown to enjoy in this province. But we also have to reduce the debt; getting the debt down certainly leaves more dollars for those particular programs.

It was also good to see in the budget the commitment, the sincere commitment, to health care in Ontario and also to education standards. Certainly in both cases the dollars have increased.

#### 1950

Another area, that I'd like to speak a little more about later on, is around disabled people. The disabled persons we have in the province are being recognized in this budget, and those are the people who help to enrich our society here in Ontario. That's one area I lobbied very hard with the Minister of Finance to recognize.

For a few minutes I'd like to speak on the tax cuts and on debt reduction, all very responsible choices taken by the Minister of Finance. We're committed to that reduction of 20% in personal income tax. That indeed was part of the Blueprint, the platform we ran on back in 1999. There's no question that tax reduction and tax cuts in this province have left more dollars in people's

pockets and more people are spending. The end result has been more tax revenue for Ontario.

It's interesting to note that the current tax cut will mean some \$4 billion more in the pockets of the people of Ontario; \$4 billion to buy widgets, to buy goods, to buy services. When they purchase those, of course the services and goods have to be supplied by somebody, and those are the people who are being hired. The end result has been, since we took office in 1995, a net increase in jobs in Ontario of some 846,000. A lot of people chuckled back in 1995 when we had a commitment of some 725,000 over the first five years. Well, we've broken that, have gone well over it—almost another 125,000 jobs—on our way to our next commitment.

Another very interesting area that you may have noticed in the budget and what's been going on is that some 735,000 people do not pay provincial income tax but do have to pay federal income tax. These are low-income families. It's a crying shame that the Liberals in Ottawa would continue to drain these families with low incomes, that they would drain them by continuing to charge them income tax. We're leading the way. This government, one I'm very proud to be part of, is leading the way with tax cuts. Tax cuts were Mike Harris's idea right from the beginning. Even back in the campaign of 1990 he was known as the Taxfighter. What's happening now? Right across Canada, Liberal governments, socialist governments, all of them are cutting taxes, following the lead of the province of Ontario.

Another aspect of this particular budget that I was excited about was to see the debt reduction. When we came into office in the second term, we were talking about a debt reduction goal, hopefully, of some \$5 billion. The first year we cut it by \$1 billion, and that looked very good. We were on track, but in this budget it's some \$3 billion, which is 80% already of the goal we had in mind, and that in spite of what appears to be slight recessionary times, a little hiccup in the economy, certainly not nearly as severe in Ontario as the rest of Canada and not nearly as severe as what's going on in the US.

So I don't think there's any question that the province of Ontario is indeed on the right track. If you check some of the polls, there's no question that people recognize what's going on in Ontario currently.

In connection with the responsible choices from our budget, as I look at something like health care, we're ensuring that quality will indeed be there. As I mentioned a few minutes ago, the budget for health care since 1995 has increased from the \$17.4 billion at that time; we've increased it by over \$6 billion, and this year it's going up by a \$1.2-billion estimate. That will amount to a 5.4% increase, significantly more than inflation.

But what is interesting that's happening is that in health care, 45 cents, or 45%, of the programmable dollar is going to health care. That was at some 38%, or 38 cents on the dollar, when we took office back in 1995. So you can see where it's evolving.

It's been said before, but I'll say it again: funding alone to the health care system is not the answer. There

has to be a better answer than simply pouring more dollars into it. Certainly there's more accountability needed. I have had physicians come to me and say there is indeed wastage in the system, particularly in the hospitals, and it's time that some accountability was brought to them.

I'd like to read a quote to you. This is from Joan Ross, who is the CEO of the Northumberland Health Care Corp: "We do have to look at reforming the health care system. We seem to be spending more, but we're not seeing the results." I think her quote could be said by many CEOs of hospitals that are doing a particularly good job. I'm particularly impressed with what that hospital and that board are accomplishing.

Also in responsible choices is education. In this budget is a \$360-million increase for education, \$360 million being put into the budget. We hear the opposition say, "That's not enough," but they never seem to say how much is enough. They always want more, but I guess that's typical Liberal rhetoric. Also in the budget, to recognize that double cohort going through our colleges and universities, is some \$293 million committed for the year 2003-04 to let those institutions know where they're at down the road so that they can indeed plan, and also recognizing the Ontario Institute of Technology at Durham College.

It's interesting. We listened to the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, I believe, make the comments earlier about concern over the tax credit that's being given or being recognized for those who want to send their young people, their students, to an independent school. Now, we've heard the Liberals talk about choice in education, something which I have promoted for a very, very long time. Yes, maybe we should be paying the transportation to assist getting students to their local school, but they should have the option to go to any school where there's space in the province of Ontario—not that they can move around every week or every two weeks, but on an annual or semi-annual basis. I was hearing the Liberals talking about this choice in where they would attend school, so this is indeed another choice. I can assure you that each and every one of these families—an awful lot of them with moderate incomes—sending their students to a religious or cultural school have to dig pretty deep to pay for this education. They're not all going to upper class, so-called private schools. I see this as another choice. I see those parents already paying their full share for the public education system, and this is some recognition to assist them.

If I may, another quote from a constituent of mine, John Melbourn. He writes, "Despite what certain groups are saying, the vast majority of people who support an independent school are not to be counted among the wealthy or the elite. We are honest, hard-working citizens of Ontario who will continue to pay taxes toward the public system and are glad to get a little breathing space in regards to what we pay toward the schooling of our children." I think that is very, very well said. It certainly sums up the concerns that I've had for them,

and I made a commitment back in 1995, when I met with a group of these parents, that I would work and lobby as best I could to ensure this end. I was pleasantly surprised it was in this budget and very, very pleased to be able to report to those parents that maybe my lobbying indeed has been successful, but certainly I know many others have lobbied as well. This is going to really be helping a lot of these parents who are very committed to having an option as to where their children are educated.

This budget of responsible choices is also zeroing in on quality of life for some of those who have some difficulties; it's really quality of life for everyone. We are committed to some \$55 million this year, to be invested in the developmental disabilities area—certainly those adults. That's to grow to some \$197 million in a few years.

The area I have a lot of concerns about and lobbied the Minister of Finance about, expressing my concerns, was adult handicapped children with aging parents. I was having about one a month come to my office, expressing concerns. They had had a stroke or a heart attack or whatever and didn't feel they were able any longer to look after one of these adult children who may have been 35 or 40 years of age. They were very worried as to what was going to happen, as to what would become of them. I was particularly pleased to see in the budget, I believe it was some \$69 million, set aside to construct spaces for these adult people with developmental handicaps. I'm pleased to see that has come, and also to see the recognizing of improved construction for more facilities to provide safety for abused women and children, and also for youth organizations.

## 2000

It's also refreshing and great to see our government working very closely with the children's aid society and with children's treatment centres. These are our young people, and it's great to see that children have been the priority for our Premier: helping with the very early years of our young people, with a tremendous number of dollars from this government being zeroed into that area. Ontario's Promise is a program that is going over extremely well.

Another area of responsible choice was in connection with the traffic problem. They are now committed to extend Highway 407 all the way out to Highway 35-115. That is going to be a tremendous boost to the economy of eastern Ontario, particularly for counties like Northumberland, Victoria and Peterborough. They are running into a real gridlock on the 401 as you go through Pickering and Ajax out to Oshawa. Hopefully, and I expect, this extension, which will be in place in a few years, will help that tremendously. It was certainly good news for us.

I think about the gridlock we now have, particularly around Toronto. Back in 1995, when I was first commuting to Toronto on a regular basis, I didn't have to worry what time of day I was driving to Toronto. I could come at almost any time and there was no stop-and-go traffic. I guess, when you create 845,000 net new jobs, those people will be going to work, a fair number of them

in Toronto. They're also buying goods, and other people with tax cuts are buying goods, and transports are on the road delivering those goods. It shouldn't be too surprising we're now having some traffic flow problems in and around Toronto. Granted, some of those highways are actually owned by the municipality, and they have a responsibility, as well as the province, but it's kind of refreshing to see that the gridlock problem we have is one that has been created because of such a stimulus of the economy in this province. It's kind of like a back-handed compliment almost.

Our Premier with his leadership and our Minister of Transportation are looking at similar plans to extending the 407 east; they're looking at similar plans around Toronto and Ottawa, and at similar plans in the Niagara Peninsula. The opposition, the NDP, when they were in government, came out with the idea of having private industry build some of these highways, but when we took office, lo and behold, I found out it really hadn't been taken over by a private consortium. I was actually quite disappointed to find that out.

For those who need to get around Toronto quickly, it's an ideal highway to use for the people in the east, because they want to be assured of getting to the airport on time. It's an excellent highway to step up to. You're pretty well assured there won't be any traffic jams, any traffic problems. You can breeze along that particular section of highway and end up at the airport with some assurance you will be there in time for your flight.

All in all, as I look at some of the industries, whether they're in Kingston, Belleville, Cobourg, Port Hope, Campbellford or Brighton, and they need to get a truck-load of goods delivered to some city west of Toronto, they can now use, or will be able to use the 115, once this extension is out to the 115, and have some assurance that they will indeed be at their destination at the point in time they've planned.

This has been an excellent budget, coming in to be of assistance to the people of Ontario. It's a budget that again recognizes the importance of tax cuts for the people of Ontario. Tax cuts: we're leading right across this whole nation. A lot of other people outside of Ontario, outside of Canada, are looking at what we've accomplished. The American government and a lot of the American states are starting to step up their tax cuts. It's really going to increase the competition, and we're going to have to relook at what we've been doing here in Ontario with tax cuts, and possibly have to look at more to meet that kind of competition.

It's also interesting to note and look at the gross domestic product that's been coming from this province for quite a few years now. We've been not only leading all the other provinces, but we've been leading all of the G7, and I guess now it's the G8, countries. They're in the developed world. That, I believe, is a record if you look at what was going on prior to our taking office. We brag about the almost 850,000 net new jobs. I believe it was something like 20,000 net jobs that we actually lost in the first five years of the 1990s—that was unfortunate—and

umpteen people were leaving this country, going to other states, going to New Brunswick. There was kind of a standard joke around Ontario that if you want to start a small business, all you have to do is buy a large business and just wait. That is exactly what was going on back in the early 1990s, when the NDP were in government.

I believe Ontario is on the right track. With the blueprint laid out in Minister Flaherty's budget, the province is set to engage in a plan of action based on a series of responsible choices, choices which will include accountability for decisions made and the courage to introduce that change. It includes tax cuts and fiscal responsibility, while at the same time honouring previous commitments to funding for health, education and social programs.

I fully support Bill 45 for its fair representation of this government's efforts to represent the people of Ontario, and I certainly encourage all the members in opposition to seriously look at this bill, because I think if they really look at it in detail, they'll be able to support it. I look forward to the speedy passage of Bill 45.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Mazzilli:** Listening to the member for Northumberland, he certainly explained this budget well. This budget has been consistent with all the budgets since 1995 in continuing to reduce taxes. The one thing we know is that reduction of taxes is proportionate to the increased revenues of government. That has been well documented since 1995. Every time we reduced taxes in any way, shape or form, government revenues actually increased.

This is something that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals just do not understand. If we look at 20 or 25 years of history, every time you increase taxes, government revenues actually go down. There are all kinds of variables for that; we understand that. If we start from that basic concept that every time we make tax reductions, government revenues go up, we certainly have more money, not less, as we hear from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals, to provide the programs we all very much need and want in our communities.

Those programs are increased funding for health care. There's been an increase in the provincial portion of health care funding by \$6 billion since the Mike Harris government was elected in 1995. I know that Mike Harris cares about health care, cares about the people in this province.

There have been increases to publicly funded education, to the tune now of public education in this province being funded at \$13.8 billion. If that is not a commitment to public education, I don't know what is. But do you know what Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal friends want to do? They want to fearmonger on a small tax credit for religious schools.

2010

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

The member for Northumberland has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Galt:** I appreciate the comments made by the member from London-Fanshawe. He reiterated this in-

crease in government revenues when there's been a tax cut, and that's certainly something that we've recognized and that has happened over and over again with each one of the tax cuts that has occurred in this province.

It was interesting back in 1995: looking over the first five years of the 1990s and seeing each tax increase that the NDP brought in, they thought there would be more revenue for their social programs, but with each increase you could see an actual drop in the graph of revenue. They dropped very, very significantly in their revenues. So not only is there proof that as you cut taxes the revenue goes up, but when you increase taxes often the revenue goes down. It all has to do with economics and elasticity of supply and demand, and it gets very complicated. I did have an economist explain to me the Laffer curve. We had reached a point when this really does happen. When you first start out on the Laffer curve, that's the beginning of low taxes, and yes, as you increase taxes, you do get more revenue. But when you get up to a certain point it goes into reverse, and that's the point we had actually reached.

It was interesting, the member for London-Fanshawe making some comments about our commitment and the commitment of Mike Harris to health and education. That's certainly a commitment we had going right back to our first platform, the Common Sense Revolution. You'll remember that; it came out in the spring of 1994, a full year ahead of an election, something that no other party had ever done in the past. And we did commit very deeply to health care and to education at that time, a promise that we have kept.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** I'll be sharing my time this evening with the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London. I'm happy to have some time to participate in this debate. I am going to focus my remarks almost exclusively on my greatest concern in this budget, besides the \$2.2 billion that is going to be given to corporations and that could be much more effectively used to protect public services. I want to focus on my major concern with the direct attack on public service, which is the education tax credit given to those who want to put their children into private schools.

I had an opportunity to speak yesterday on the resolution of our leader, Dalton McGuinty, calling for that tax credit to be withdrawn. I had the opportunity to speak about how heartsick it makes me to see where this tax credit is going to take our public education system, to see the kind of fragmentation and segregation that it's going to introduce, to know that this kind of tax credit will lead inevitably to two-tiered education, where the best education is reserved for those who can afford to pay for more than public education is able to deliver. How heartsick I felt about the loss of 150 years of commitment to providing a universally accessible quality public education system.

I touched very quickly yesterday on how angry I was as well, and it's the anger that I want to return to in my time this evening, my anger at how deliberately this

government has prepared the way for the dissolution of public education: strangled, starved public education to the point where they hope there will be a receptiveness on the part of people who don't feel the public education system can provide quality any longer and who are going to be more than willing to accept the government's financial incentive to withdraw their children from the public system.

It makes me angry because I look back to the beginning of this agenda, this attack on public education by the Harris government, and I remember John Snobelen, the former Minister of Education, when he made the famous—or infamous—“create a crisis” speech, where he said that you've got to create a crisis in order to pave the way for transformational change. Mr Snobelen said, and he believed, as I believe so many of his colleagues believe, that you've got to create a clean slate so that there will be no resistance at all to bringing in your own agenda.

There were some concerns even back then that the kind of transformational change that the then Minister of Education was talking about was really charter schools, private schools funded with public funds, that really what they wanted to do was to change the very nature of universally accessible quality public education in which every child has an opportunity for equality of education. Mr Snobelen, then Minister of Education, realized that the public was not sympathetic to direct attacks on public education, that they were not prepared to see their government move public funding into chartered schools, into private schools, that they wanted support for the public education system that we've tried to build in this province for 150 years. So Mr Snobelen read the political winds and backed off a little bit, and his government said, “We'll just have to come at this agenda in a somewhat different way.”

But they still needed an immediate \$1 billion out of education, so in order to prepare the public for the taking out, the stripping out, of \$1 billion from public education, the beginnings of the erosion of the quality of the public education system, they started their attacks. They started their attacks on trustees. They said, “You can't, after all, trust these people with public education.” They said, “Trustees have been raising class sizes. What do they know about protecting quality of education?” The fact that that was not true was incidental to the public relations campaign, which had its goal of discrediting public school trustees.

They discredited teachers. You couldn't trust teachers either. And not only that, teachers were ripping off the system. They were lazy. They weren't working as much as teachers in the rest of the country, at least according to the infamous clock ads, which this government spent several million dollars of public money on in order to disseminate this message about how teachers could not be trusted to be concerned about the quality of public education.

The agenda was deliberate. It was an agenda of attempting to discredit the people who were responsible,

who were entrusted with the delivery of public education, to discredit them so that they could pave the way for the next step in their agenda, and of course the next step in their agenda was Bill 160: taking total control of the funding of education so they could indeed find their \$1 billion. And when the current Minister of Education says to us, “You did not support Bill 160,” she is right. We fought Bill 160 with everything that we had in us, and we couldn't stop it any more, I'm afraid, than we may be able to stop the government from taking this next step, the final blow to public education.

Bill 160, which gave the government total control over educational funding, made them the managers of our schools for all intents and purposes, left a nominal, no-win role for school trustees, led then to funding formulas that cut funding by raising class sizes. The Minister of Education said we didn't support Bill 160 in having maximum class sizes. There were no maximum class sizes in 160. Bill 160 set an unacceptable average class size of 25 students in an elementary school class, where we had 18 and 19 and 20 students in junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten, and the only way school boards can have reasonable class sizes in those junior grades now is to have higher class sizes in grades 4 to 8. When this Minister of Education says that they have set maximum class sizes, I ask her to go back and look at the reality of what the public education system was like before this government got hold of it.

I'm going to run out of time to go through the history of what this government did to special education, leaving 35,000 students on a waiting list. They say they increased special-education funding; they neglected the fact that they took unto themselves the tax dollars that the city of Toronto and the city of Ottawa were putting into special education, 100% of their own funding in order to provide special-education needs. And now they leave 35,000 students on a waiting list for special education.

They stripped the budgets for textbooks and for equipment. I met with the teachers in Sir Winston Churchill high school in my riding. Do you know that this government, with its new tests and its new curriculum, requires something called graphic calculators? Do you know that that Sir Winston Churchill high school cannot provide graphic calculators for their grade 10 students. I don't know how the grade 10 students are ever going to pass the grade 10 math exam, because they don't have enough money to give them the equipment they need to even learn what's required.

## 2020

I think of my grandson starting junior kindergarten this year. Do you know what was the first thing he did? He brought home the chocolate bars that he had to sell—a five-year-old in junior kindergarten—because that was the only way they could get the supplies they needed for the junior kindergarten. So don't let this government say they have done anything to improve the quality of public education, because they have been systematically dismantling it and squeezing it and starving it. They have created cuts. They've brought in cuts, they've created

chaos, they have constantly attacked the people who provide public education. They claim that this was about quality, but we have said all along that you can't provide a quality of education when you attack and devalue the work of the very people who are entrusted with providing that education to our children.

So this budget bill now shows just how phony their so-called support for public education has always been. We know now what the transformational change is that Mr Snobelen and his government and the people who were urging him to move forward on this agenda so many years ago, we know now what it is, and it is indeed transforming the public education system into a truly two-tiered, segregated, fragmented educational system.

This government has been very clever. They have found a way to achieve two agendas at once. They've given people a financial incentive to withdraw their children from the public school system. In return for that, they make money. They save more money than they've already cut. They only have to pay those people at the end of the four years, whatever the Minister of Finance said it is, before it costs the full \$300 million or \$500 million or \$700 million that it will cost. They only have to pay those people, give them a tax credit of \$3,500. But they save \$7,000 for every student that is withdrawn from the public school system. So they save their dollars and they still get to move forward on their privatization agenda.

I see this agenda happening in public education. I wanted to trace its history. And I'm going to have an opportunity, when we get to Bill 46, to show how they are doing exactly the same thing to our public hospitals. I will outline how they have started the attack on those entrusted with providing public health care in our hospital system in order to move to their agenda of privatization of our hospitals.

But I want to conclude my remarks this evening with quoting something that I quoted in a speech back in 1996-97. It's Erika Shaker, who is with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, whom I was quoting. She said, "The language of democracy—choice; freedom; diversity—has been hijacked [by the advocates of the radical right] to reflect an agenda that requires rigidity, exclusivity and elitism under the guise of making the system more 'accountable' to the 'tax-paying public.'" For destroying the universal public education system that Egerton Ryerson envisaged 150 years ago, shame on this government for leaving such a shameful legacy.

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** I think it's incumbent on myself as critic responsible for agriculture to point out to the rural communities and to the farmers of this province how, once again, this government has neglected the agricultural community and, once again, agriculture has been left out in the cold by this government.

The government announces that they've reinvested \$40 million more into agriculture, but that's a fallacy, because it's little more than recycled, reannounced and unspent monies from a previous budget, from previous

ministry programs. This is not new money as the government leads us to believe. This money comes from programs that didn't spend their money in the previous year. Investments that should have been made in the year 2000-01 in the agricultural community were not made by this government.

The Harris government likes to talk about grandiose announcements, but they don't spend the money where it's most urgently needed in rural Ontario right now. This is simply shifting money from one column to another.

As you read through this budget, as you listen to the throne speech, there's not a single mention of agriculture. There's not a single mention of the word "farm" in that budget. That shows the lack of commitment of the Harris government to rural Ontario, and more importantly, to the farmers of this province. The number two industry in this province is totally neglected by the Harris government.

Worse yet, we know that there's going to be a continued crisis with commodity prices. We know that we're up against subsidies with the United States and European communities, but is there any money in this budget? There's no money in this budget allocated for emergency grain stabilization payments. There's no money budgeted for an increase in the market revenue insurance program. We know the desperate situation that farmers in this province are going to face, and again this government turns its back on the farmers of Ontario. The government likes to say to the farmers that they're putting themselves on the back for increasing the budget. But we know that Mike Harris promised in 1995 no cuts to agriculture. We know too that the agricultural budget in this province is 20% less than when the Harris government took office. You've abandoned the farmers of this province. Shame on the Harris government.

Let's talk a little bit about education. I would really urge the members on all sides of the House to read this wonderful book by Ruth Cohen. It's called *Alien Invasion: How the Tories Mismanaged Ontario*. There's a wonderful, wonderful chapter in this book called "The Caterpillar Speech." The caterpillar speech was presented by the Minister of Education at the time, John Snobelen. I'm going to read excerpts from the speech, because I think it's incumbent that people know what's happening, how this crisis in education has come about. This crisis in education has come about because of the initiatives of the Harris government. It's a sad day because of what's happened.

I'm going to quote from the speech. "There are two theories, broad theories of change management. One is this: shortening down the survival period or bankrupting the organization. Those are the two possibilities of causing change in an organization." This is a speech that the Minister of Education gave to bureaucrats, deputy ministers, in the Ministry of Education. Very, very sad.

"That kind of change, that quality of change, isn't available until you bankrupt how it is. Really bankrupt how it is. If you don't bankrupt it well, if you don't create a great crisis, you'll improve to death...."

"When you bankrupt an organization, not a lot of folks know much about that. It's well avoided, but not well studied. Inventing crisis is something we're not, again, intuitively good at."

During the question period for the Minister of Education, individuals had an opportunity to call in and speak to the minister. This was a participant on the telephone: "Here's my question. Do we need to bankrupt [the Ministry of Education and Training] before change can take place?"

Minister Snobelen: "In my opinion, yes, in a way that's responsible for what we want to accomplish, and that is to bankrupt those actions and activities that aren't consistent with the future that we're committed to."

"There's a couple of things that we need to get done, probably along the way. One of those ... and we've already made great attempts at this.... I don't think it's a completed process ... in my view ... and that is declaring a future." Well, we're seeing first-hand what that future for education is today as a result of this speech.

"One of the problems with that is there's a tendency to want to wait for others to prepare it for you. And it's not a very collaborative process. So that needs to be done before what needs bankrupting, and how to bankrupt it, occurs."

"Like to think of it as creating a useful crisis. The word 'bankrupt' might conjure up other images. Creating a useful crisis of what part of this will be about."

To the citizens of Ontario, these hollow, sad words that the Minister of Education put forth in the fall of 1995 are coming true and ringing true in this province today. We're seeing it all around. I'm glad to see we've got two members from London here tonight. I hope they read the London Free Press this morning where the Thames Valley District School Board is set to cut 75 jobs. They received more money, but they had a debt of \$1 million from the previous year and they're projecting a \$4.2-million deficit. We're going to see the elimination of 30 educational assistants, the elimination of secretarial jobs, the elimination of school support jobs, the elimination of part-time staff who supervise children at lunch.

"Board officials said they would try to avoid layoffs through retirement and voluntary buyouts 'where possible.'

"The province has threatened to take over any school board that doesn't balance its books."

I think the Thames Valley board is ripe for the picking, and it's all as a result of this government. It's great to see two London members here. I hope they hear these words from the Thames Valley District School Board and take heed of what they're warning us about within our own ridings.

I think it's important to get some other points on the record. I firmly believe that universally accessible, high-quality public education is a cornerstone of a just society and the key to our long-term prosperity. That's why the Ontario Liberals have as our priority the improvement of public schools so that all working families can count on the highest quality education possible for their children.

## 2030

What we've witnessed for the past six years, dating from this 1995 speech of John Snobelen, is the Harris government constantly eroding our public education system, seething disputes over extracurricular activities. Grade 11 textbooks are due to be replaced this year, but the money's not there because funding has been cut in half. School boards are getting \$40 million less to heat their schools, even though the cost of natural gas has skyrocketed. The price of gasoline is on the rise, but the government has cut \$19 million from busing. I can tell you that education for a Liberal government will be a priority.

The government's latest provision of a tax credit for private schools is not the answer. What we're going to see with this is probably in excess of \$500 million taken from the education system on top of the \$1.2 billion this government has already removed. It's an enormous reversal for this government, which has gone on record as opposing what they're proposing today.

I truly have to say, on a personal note, that I recognize there are very many dedicated parents who wish to send their children to a faith-based school, and I recognize there is an issue of fairness. I've always respected that. I'm not personally opposed to funding of religious schools. I believe firmly that this is an issue that must be addressed, but it has to be addressed in a timely manner and in a manner that adequately deals with the issue of equity.

Catholic schools in this province are now fully funded. Along with full public funding of the Catholic school system comes the responsibility to admit children of all faiths, accept public governance, hire provincially certified teachers, fully implement the curriculum and accept rigorous and routine testing. This is a core issue of accountability for public funds.

I am adamantly opposed to this government's proposed tax credit for private schools. Those parents who choose to send their children to a private, for-profit secular school have made a personal choice and not one that I believe the taxpayers of Ontario should be paying for. By including all private schools in this issue, the Harris government has callously used religious minorities as a smokescreen to bring in a voucher system that will channel public funds to all private schools in this province—a very sad day.

I appreciate the extraordinary efforts many individuals have made in their sacrifices for their children. I believe the issue of fairness must be addressed. I'm prepared to strongly advocate for an acceptable solution. I'll continue to work with my colleagues in the Liberal Party toward developing a policy that truly addresses the issue of religious educational equity. This proposal, this tax credit, this voucher, is not the answer.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Ms Martel:** I appreciated the comments that have been made. Because I won't get a chance to read this particular editorial into the record when I speak next, I thought I would highlight some of the points that have

been made. This, interestingly enough, is entitled "Education Tax Fight Has Just Begun"—Toronto Sun, Sunday, May 27, 2001, by Christina Blizzard. Some of the key points are as follows and reinforce what my colleagues in the Liberal Party have said:

"One of the most valid criticisms of the Tories on this issue is the way it was done. To include it in the budget bill is a fairly cynical ploy. It makes you think the Tories were hoping to catch everyone off guard by doing it through the back door.

"As recently as April 10, Premier Mike Harris had this to say about news reports his government was pondering the voucher route:

"'[Vouchers] have never been espoused by me or the Minister of Education.... Nor do I think it will come as long as I'm Premier,' he told reporters at the Royal York Hotel.

"I don't know if I can be more definitive about that."

"You can argue that a tax credit is not a voucher, I suppose. All the same, it certainly is a first, hefty step down that road. And no other province provides tax credits such as this, although some do provide funding directly to religious schools.

"This is such a significant change in education policy it really should have been part of the Tories' last election platform. Failing that, it should at least be a separate bill, with public hearings and a full debate. Instead, it will be lumped in with the budget bill.

"In fact, the Tories would be smart to not only break this out of the budget bill entirely, but then to have a free, recorded vote on it in the Legislature. That way, all MPPs would be on record as to how they voted...."

As well: Whatever prompted them to do this, the Tories were under increasing pressure to deal with inequities in the public school system. "Funding all faiths will simply undermine the public school system." That's from the Toronto Sun—

**The Acting Speaker:** Before we go on, I just want to address those of you who want to get up and speak. I suggest that you talk to your House leader and get him to schedule you for debate. If you insist on doing it back and forth across this aisle, you won't be here.

Comments and questions?

**Mr Mazzilli:** Those were very thoughtful words that I'm sure we'll all take to heart in this Legislature. Part of a progressive democracy, part of a progressive Legislature and a responsible government is also a responsible opposition. What we hear coming out of the opposition, quite frankly, is irresponsible. You want to have an open debate on things that are in the budget. Let's have that open debate. But some of the words we hear from our friends, like "I didn't make the choice, so why should I have to pay for it?" Do you know what? You're rambling off words you hear other partisan people making.

Did I have the choice when Jean Chrétien gave tax credits, that he's going around giving a billion dollars, Sheila Copps is running around the country giving away a billion dollars to culture? Did I make that choice? No, I did not. Part of democracy is that I have to accept that

choice, because they are the government of the day. Did his constituents make the choice of giving away a billion dollars on culture? I don't know if it's the right choice—right or wrong—but Sheila Copps is able to do that. A billion dollars. Is it a priority? I don't know.

Did we have an election on the issue, as they are suggesting on a small tax credit for religious schools? A fully funded public system that's already \$13.8 billion, and now that we're extending a small tax credit to religious schools, somehow that's the end of the world. We're supposed to call an election on this issue. Do you know what? When the federal Liberals cut funding to the province for health and for education, when they give away billions for culture and other things, I don't see them going to the polls. I suggest Dalton McGuinty and Liberals stop fearmongering.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

**Mr Lalonde:** I want to thank the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London for his good words and also the position he's taken on rural municipalities and on agriculture.

I've been hearing on the other side that we should call our federal friends. I wonder if they have looked at the budget. The Ontario government will be receiving close to \$2 billion more for health care from the federal government. It's right there in your budget.

Also, I'm really surprised, when everybody was running around, all the small, rural area municipalities were going around to meet the deadline for the OSTAR program—again, I'm looking at this in the budget—not a single cent is showing as being expected or forecast from the federal government. Have you not signed the agreement with the feds?

Everybody is waiting to improve the water quality of their own municipalities. We have municipalities with E. coli. We have municipalities with parasites. In my own area, Clarence, Bourget and Hammond at the present time—they were told last week to boil their water. But there's absolutely nothing from this government that will protect the health and security of our people in rural areas.

Also, on the agricultural side, when the Liberals were in power, the budget for agriculture was \$565 million. Today it is down to \$446 million. Of the \$446 million, as my friend just said, \$40 million came from last year's budget, which was never used and will not be used again because we just can't meet the requirements your government is asking for.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. 2040

**Mr Caplan:** It's a pleasure to comment. I commend my colleague from Thunder Bay-Atikokan and my colleague from Elgin-Middlesex-London on their very fine remarks. I know they both talked about aspects of the budget and how it has failed Ontario's working families. One of the most important things is the investment in young people and the investment that the province makes in post-secondary education. Back in 1995, when the government took over, they immediately cut \$400 mil-

lion from our colleges and universities. Just like that, it was gone.

In this budget they make the incredible claim that they are putting more money into post-secondary education at a greater rate than has ever happened before. When you look at the budget, they are committing \$100 million per year for the next three years. So they're not even replacing that which they extracted, that which they painfully cut, and have placed the burden on Ontario's students. They aren't even going to replace it in this budget, and they call this a commitment to the young people in the province of Ontario. It is an absolute disgrace.

I wanted to make one other comment about the revenues of the government. I look on page 48, where it says, "Revenue Outlook." It shows revenue from taxation down, income from government enterprises down, other revenue down. But there is one category where revenues are increasing in Ontario. That is in federal payments. Obviously, what's very clear is that the Ontario government is using federal dollars to pay for the programs in Ontario because their own revenues are declining. In your own budget it's very clear. It's a total shell game and the people of Ontario are no longer going to be fooled.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan has two minutes to respond.

**Mrs McLeod:** I note that the former Minister of Education has graced the House with his presence this evening. I'm sure he must be somewhat smug about the fact that we are referring so frequently to him this evening in our speeches, to an earlier speech that he made, and I suspect feeling somewhat satisfied as he reflects on the success that he and Mr Giorno in the Premier's back office have had in fulfilling the agenda that they set out not in a truly public fashion so many years ago, but certainly in a way that, looking back, we can identify quite clearly.

My colleague has referred to the "butterfly" speech. It's the same "create a crisis" speech that I referred to, described as a butterfly speech in a new publication, which quotes it in detail. I remember it without having to go back and reread it. That's the speech in which Mr Snobelen said, "I've never yet met a caterpillar who wanted to become a butterfly. So somehow we have to either convince the caterpillars that they want to become butterflies or, if we can't do that, we may just have to run over them." Well, that's clearly the view that this government has. They did their best to prepare the public to be receptive to their agenda, to attack public education, to attack trustees and teachers and even students, and they found the public wasn't buying, so they decided they would just run over everybody who was a supporter of public education, they would just slip in their tax credit and force it through with their majority, which is what they're about to do with this budget bill, and in the process of doing it they're not terribly concerned whether or not the caterpillars get run over, whether those crushed caterpillars are the trustees or the teachers or the parents

who have objected to this agenda all along and who can't now be heard by this government, or the students themselves, who will pay the price for a government that is prepared to take all power to force through its agenda but at the end of the day is prepared to accept no accountability for the impact of its action.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Martel:** It will be no surprise to members tonight that in the short time I have I'm going to focus exclusively on part VII of the bill, which is the section where the government has now decided to use public money to fund private schools. I'm going to focus on this for two reasons. Whether or not some members of the Conservative Party want to admit it, this decision to use public money to fund private schools represents a fundamental change in public policy, education policy, in this province, and it has been done with absolutely no effort at having input from the population at large.

Second, I want to focus on it because it's clear evidence to me that this government continues on what has been a very meditated, conscious attack on the public school system since this government was elected, a public school system that by and large has served people in our province very well. In fact, when ministers of the crown of this government go abroad and talk to investors in other countries, they boast about our public school system and how good it is. Yet we have seen, through policy changes and underfunding, this government trying to undermine a system that has really served Ontario well.

The mandate of the first Minister of Education in this Conservative government, who is here with us tonight, has really been fulfilled, and one of the first things he did—that was on tape—was to say to his ministry staff, "We need to create a crisis in education." The government certainly did that, and we haven't got out from under that crisis ever since. A big part of that crisis has been this government's cut of well over \$1 billion now, since its election, in funding to public education in the province. That has had very serious consequences on students, on teachers, on families right across this province. It's worth emphasizing what the results of some of these cuts have been. Because of the cuts, in 1998 Ontario ranked 55th in North America in terms of elementary education funding. The US average for pupil funding is \$7,254, versus Ontario's \$4,709. We have over 138 schools that have closed or are slated to close in the next two years. Ten per cent fewer elementary schools have full-time principals in the last three years alone. In fact, only 85% of elementary schools now have full-time principals. Some 42% of elementary classrooms have 26 or more students, despite the government's rhetoric that class size is being reduced. For grade 2 students, class size has increased by more than 10%. We have 24% fewer elementary schools that have English-as-a-second-language programs. And in Ontario, especially in southern Ontario, Toronto and the GTA, where our communities are so multicultural, that is a significant and

serious problem for new immigrants who are trying to be integrated into our province.

With respect to busing, all boards have had their transportation budgets cut. In the Hamilton-Wentworth board, for example, this has resulted in a loss of \$1.2 million in busing services for 1,500 students. I won't even get into the problems of busing in northern Ontario.

More than 65% of elementary schools report that students are sharing worn, out-of-date textbooks. We've got more than 34,000 children in elementary schools alone on a waiting list for special-education services.

Since 1997, we've had a 38% decrease in elementary school psychologists. At the secondary level, the loss of psychologists has been calculated at 30%. At a Cornwall school where a student was arrested for making death threats, the board could only afford one school psychologist for its 37 schools.

The following are cuts in elementary schools last year: 44% of elementary schools in the province had no music teacher; 63% had no physical education teacher; 62% had no English-as-a-second-language teacher; 82% had no full-time librarian; design and technology teachers have been cut by 48% in elementary schools since 1998; finally, since the Conservatives came to power, enrolment in Ontario has increased by 59,000 students, while the number of teachers has decreased by 11,399. In view of the increase in student population and the decrease in teacher population, you'd think this government would want to invest significantly in public school funding in this province. The reality is that we are dealing already with a loss of well over \$1 billion from the system and a government that now proposes to take \$300 million, when the rebate scheme is fully in place, year in and year out, again out of the system.

If I thought it was only \$300 million, I may not be so concerned. I would definitely oppose it because I do not believe for one moment we should be using public money to fund private schools. But I don't believe for one moment that we are only looking at a sum total of \$300 million. I believe, first and foremost, the rebate and the cost for that, which is a cost that comes directly out of funding for public schools, will be much larger than \$300 million, and I also firmly believe that the rebate system is the first step toward what the government really wants to do, which is a voucher system for schools in this province. That's why I say this price tag is going to be far more than \$300 million and this rebate scheme, in my mind, is but the first step down the road where the government has always wanted to take us, and that is to voucher schools in this province.

**2050**

This is the legacy to date with respect to the very negative effects of this government's cuts to education, which are in the order of well over \$1 billion. It is very clear that money that should be used to invest in the public school system is money that will now go to support the private school system. I don't say that just by myself. The Minister of Education of this government has already made it clear. You will recall that when the

United Nations came out and made comments about whether Ontario should fund other religious faiths, the Minister of Education said, "We've been very clear that our goal is a good quality public education, and the estimates of \$300 million needed to fund religious schools would be \$300 million that would come out of the public school system."

It is very clear that this is where the money is coming from to fund private schools—out of money that should be going to the public system. As I said earlier, I don't believe it's going to be only \$300 million. I think it's going to be a lot more than that, and I think this takes us well down the road to voucher schools, which is where the government really wants to be.

Earlier, in response to comments from the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan, I quoted an editorial that was in Toronto Sun on the weekend and I want to quote another one. This is from Monday, May 28, 2001. The Toronto Sun editorial is headed, "One For All And All For One." I'll quote parts of it:

"True, it's only a partial subsidy on the first \$7,000 of tuition, starting at 10% next year and levelling off at 50% in 2006. But it's a continuation of Tory undermining of the public school system by earmarking public funds to other school systems...."

"Latter-day Tory rhetoric about this being a further extension of school 'choice' is absurd. No one is denying parents the 'choice' of putting their children into private schools. But what the Harris Tories are now saying (although they used to say the opposite) is that parents who choose to do this have a right to funding by the state. Why?

"This government has plenty of work to do in fixing the public education system, which must accept every child, unlike any other system, and is the glue that holds a multicultural society together...."

"Finally, that the Tories plan to allow such a precedent-setting move to proceed as part of an omnibus budget bill—without separate public hearings and a separate bill—is arrogant.

"Then again, the whole idea is wrong, the rationale is wrong and the implementation is wrong."

I use those quotes very purposely, because everyone knows the Toronto Sun normally would support anything this government does. When the Toronto Sun, in two editorials, back to back—on the weekend and earlier this week—tells you this is wrong, surely they are sending you a signal. It is wrong. We should not be making a fundamental change to the funding of education in the system, which we are doing, through the back door in a budget bill, without any kind of province-wide public hearings. We are making a fundamental change to allow public funds to be used for private schools, and that is wrong.

I hope that Speaker Carr will agree with the point of order that was put forward by our House leader today, which is that this bill should be divided and that we should deal with a separate bill that deals with this

government's decision to go down the road to use public money to fund private schools.

Even if it doesn't happen that he will support it, this government is surely obliged, with respect to such a fundamental change, to allow the public to have their say. That is why New Democrats have been consistent in calling on this government to have full province-wide public hearings on this bill, in the same way your predecessor Bill Davis had on a former government bill where there were 80 days of public hearings so that people could have their say. This move is wrong. We should not be using public money to fund private schools. The government should have full public hearings, because I think the public will come out and say exactly that.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Galt:** I'm interested in the remarks made by the member for Nickel Belt. She really zeroed in on what she said is the funding of private schools. I think of it in terms of independent schools. I guess she's opposed to choice, because that's really what it's about, having a choice. They already pay. They pay completely for the public education system and then they pay several thousand dollars for their independent school, whether it be for cultural purposes or for religious purposes.

I think she forgets that we've increased the spending in the public system by some \$360 million this year. She talks about cuts in the education system. I would challenge her to tell us which year she can identify that cuts occurred. I don't know which year she's referring to, because in every year since we took office it has steadily increased. Maybe she's talking pre-1995, when in fact the NDP was in office.

We are indeed committed to quality education in the public system, if you look at our track record. I hear a lot of teachers complimenting us on the curriculum, complimenting us on the report card, and also things like teacher testing that we're doing out there. There are just so many things this government has done to improve quality of education.

She also referred to the undermining of the public system. I see this as a real opportunity for the public system—whether it be the separate board or the public board—to compete and demonstrate how good they actually are. I don't see this as a disadvantage for them. I see this as a real opportunity and I have no doubt that they'll rise to the occasion and that all students will be better off because of it.

**Mr Peters:** I want to commend the member from Nickel Belt for her comments. I can tell you when the students in this province are going to be truly better off, and that's going to be the day, two years down the road, when this government is gone, because we've seen the constant attacks on the education system by this government since day one, since they were elected in 1995.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Peters:** Obviously the truth hurts, when you start to hear them speak up on the other side.

We've heard the caterpillar-butterfly speech the former Minister of Education gave, where he talked about bankrupting the system and about creating a crisis in the system. When you read the full context of that speech, it sends shivers up your spine because of what we've seen happen: what was said in 1995 has come true today. It's a really sad day because of what has happened to the education system in this province under the watch of this government. You've abandoned students, you've abandoned teachers and you've abandoned the parents in this province. You try to claim making the system better; if anything, you've turned the system around and made it worse. You've brought us to this point here today where we're seeing vouchers in front of us that are going to be used for private and secular schools in this province.

In my last few comments, I want to quote some comments an individual made. "Working farms are becoming an endangered species. It's a capital-intensive industry.... Trade wars between the US and Europe are affecting prices. National and international forces have pushed their [farmers'] backs to the wall. Quebec, Alberta and Saskatchewan are actively helping farmers. Ontario is without assistance or they have ad hoc assistance. Farmers need tools to compete...." Do you know who said that? The Premier of the province said that in 1990. They've abandoned farmers since 1995. They claim they're helping them—no cuts to agriculture—but we've seen a 20% cut in the agricultural budget, a disgrace by this government.

**Mr Mazzilli:** I paused for a moment for everyone to come back to what we were talking about, and that is Bill 45, the budget act.

One thing that's been common in this province and in this country is that different social organizations come up with a budget, and the budget should mirror their own on the day the budget is released. One thing I've failed to see so far, after the release of this budget with about \$60 billion in spending and revenue, is Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals come up with a budget of their own. How would they spend the people's money in Ontario? That is a fundamental question that we should be asking and that I believe the media should be asking.

We heard the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London talking about the farmers, whom the Liberals abandoned in 1990.

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We've heard issues in regard to "not enough spending here": \$13.8 billion in publicly funded education. What do they propose it should be? Should it be \$16 billion, \$17 billion? Tell us. We've never heard that from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals.

The member from Elgin-Middlesex-London, can we hear what kind of support you would provide to the farmers of Ontario? Can we hear that? Tell the media; tell your farmers. Come out with the number. We're looking forward to that day where we can see a solid issue.

My friend from Niagara today certainly made an appeal to the Speaker in dividing certain bills up in

voting on those. I would like to see that, because Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals wouldn't know which side to take on most of these issues, and I would actually welcome that.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Caplan:** I certainly want to commend the member from Nickel Belt on her comments. She focused mainly on the area of education. I would just say not only to her but to all members of the chamber but especially the member from London-Fanshawe, on May 4, 1999, then Minister of Education Dave Johnson stood in this House and he said, "I assure the member opposite that over \$15 billion will be spent this year for all schools and education programming in this province."

So if that member, if the government, is correct—and I don't believe necessarily that they are because they play with numbers—says \$13.8 billion is being spent on education in the province of Ontario today, what happened to \$1.2 billion from May 4, 1999? Where did it go? If that's not a cut, what is? Where the heck is the money? The member can stand up and talk about, "We're spending more," but according to their own education minister there is a direct cut of \$1.2 billion.

I'd also like to read into the record comments of another minister of the Harris government, and that's Minister Janet Ecker. She wrote, "While the government recognizes the right of parents to choose alternative forms of education for their children, it continues to have no plans to provide funding to private religious schools or to parents of children that attend such schools. As we set out in our submission to the UN, extending funding to religious private schools would result in fragmentation of the education system in Ontario and undermine the goal of universal access to education"—Janet Ecker, Minister of Education, the province of Ontario.

I'd ask the members—that was then, this is now—where is the mandate to do this?

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Nickel Belt has two minutes to respond.

**Ms Martel:** I'd like to thank the members from Northumberland, Elgin-Middlesex-London, London-Fanshawe and Don Valley East for making some comments. There are a couple of things I'd like to say in response.

The member from Don Valley East put it very correctly on the record. The former Minister of Education, before M<sup>me</sup> Ecker, talked about how much money the government was going to spend, was committed to: over \$15 billion. The government is nowhere near spending that amount of money. We want to talk about the losses. It's very clearly seen from 1999 on, and this has been very well documented.

Secondly, with respect to thoughts that providing a tax credit is going to put pressure on public and Catholic boards to enhance the quality of education, there was a very interesting letter to the editor that was written by Doreen Dewar, who is the chairwoman of the Rainbow District School Board, which is one of the district school boards in my riding. She said the following: "To equate

tax credits with putting 'pressure on public and Catholic boards to enhance the quality of education' is simply beyond the realm of credibility."

She made a couple of points: private schools are not mandated to use ministry-approved textbooks or teach the new secondary school curriculum. Secondly, private schools need not employ teachers who are college of teachers-certified. Thirdly, although it wasn't in her article but I'll raise it here, we also discovered clearly today that many of these schools are exempt from the Human Rights Code, specifically from the provisions with respect to discrimination.

But the government thinks it's so very appropriate to use tax credits as a means of trying to force competition between public and Catholic schools for students. Is the government prepared to ensure that private schools have to meet the same obligations, both with respect to the delivery of the curriculum in this province and with respect to qualifications of teachers and with respect to allowing every student who wants to attend when they put public money into those schools—is the government going to change to ensure that the private schools meet all the standards that Catholic and public schools have to at this point?

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Mazzilli:** Certainly it's a privilege to get up on behalf of my constituents of London-Fanshawe and speak to Bill 45, which I believe is a very balanced budget. We heard the finance minister stand in his place and say, "Mr Speaker, the budget is balanced." That's something that we have not heard of in this province for many years—the third consecutive balanced budget in the province of Ontario, from the Mike Harris government.

One thing we've heard continually from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals is that, "You should spend more here, you should spend more there and you should tax our working families." I know that our Premier, Mike Harris, will fight for working families and will not allow Dalton McGuinty and the provincial Liberals to get their hands close to our working families' money any time soon. The reason I say that is because, as I said before, most often what we see at the end of a federal budget or a provincial budget being introduced is different social organizations coming up with a budget that would mirror their own. If they were the finance ministers, these are the items they would support. Although I've seen some of those budgets and perhaps do not agree with all of the components, I would welcome and I would challenge the media and the public to ask Dalton McGuinty and provincial Liberals to come up with a budget that they would produce, and stop complaining about, "You're not spending enough here and there." What we hear every day in this Legislature are different critics and every one of them gets up and says, "You're not spending enough in this area. You're not spending enough in that area. You're not spending enough in the other areas." I'd like to know from them, if they were the government and they had a finance minister, where they would spend the money.

We're focused on working families and tax cuts. Tax cuts are directly proportionate to growth and that is something certainly the public in Ontario has understood. Throughout North America, in all the jurisdictions, there's a direct proportion between taxation and growth. In this province we had reached the direction where there was no growth and it was simply because our taxes were too high proportionate to anyone bothering to invest any money. We saw a pull-out of investments in all kinds of areas and negative growth for so many years.

Of course, what happens during that? When governments have less money, services are cut, so we saw services cut when the provincial Liberals had a \$2-billion deficit and we saw services cut when the NDP had a deficit, and they certainly added on to the debt. Mike Harris and our government understood that could not go on. Deficits and debts are only a way of mortgaging our future. It will only mean less services later, as opposed to more. With this balanced budget, the good news is that as we go along we can look forward to more services, not less, as we hear from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals.

Out of a \$60-billion budget, you'd figure Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals would have an issue with more than a simple tax credit for religious schools that amounts to some \$300 million. Surely there's more they could go after than that. Quite frankly, that is the only thing they've gone after. They've gone after the hard-working families that are going to receive a 10% deduction of a total tuition up to a maximum of \$7,000. We're talking about \$700.

Dalton McGuinty stands in his place every day and repeats the words "working family." The way he and his Liberal friends behave, they wouldn't know a working family if they tripped over them. That is not how you behave with working families. Working families work very hard for their money. The people in my riding who work at some of the manufacturing plants, some of the construction locations, work hard for their money. They expect services and they certainly expect deductions.

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Let me understand this. If you have the rich who invest and are allowed to capital-cost things, allowed to depreciate things, somehow that's OK. But if a working family takes a tax credit because they want to send their child to a religious school, somehow that's wrong. We believe differently. Mike Harris and our government believe differentially. Those working families deserve that \$700 tax credit—and that's the maximum. We keep hearing about the maximum. We keep hearing Dalton McGuinty talking about Upper Canada College. For the life of me, I don't know where he gets those facts. Some of those tuitions are \$30,000. That's not what this is intended for.

I have a couple of schools in my riding—London Parental Christian School, which I visited and toured. At some of these schools they have family caps. I forget exactly what they are, but it's something like \$5,000. Where some families who have more than one child—maybe four children—obviously can't afford the \$3,000

tuition per child, they cap it at a family limit and do fundraising in the community, and so on, to put their children through. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals have a problem with those working families who have made that choice.

As I said about choices—not that it's right or wrong—we saw Sheila Copps running around the country giving away some \$700 million in the area of culture. I don't know whether that's right or wrong. But we're not even talking about half that amount, and yet Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals want to attack those working families.

On behalf of the working families in my riding who have chosen this option, I support them, and I support them in taking a tax credit. I see the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London is here. As I said, I want to see a budget from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals. Approximately \$60 billion—I want to see a budget. What would you commit to farmers? What would you commit to education? What would you commit to health care? What would you commit to roads? It's typical: you don't know.

I spoke earlier about my good friend from Niagara, who submitted a request to the Speaker today about splitting up the bill. Certainly I don't support anything that would draw out the process too long, but I do support voting on different components of a bill, because I think the people who actually would be afraid of that are the Liberals.

I spoke about this on another day, on An Act to amend the Public Service Act, whereby the civilian members of the Ontario Provincial Police simply have choice. Obviously, Mike Harris and our government believe people have the right to make their own choices. What we heard is that some of the civilian members from the Ontario Provincial Police wanted to leave OPSEU and join the OPPA. We believe they should have that choice.

Clearly, we've heard from the NDP that they don't support that choice, and they believe all provincial employees should be represented by OPSEU. I don't have a problem with that position. I don't agree with it, but they made a decision. Behind closed doors, do you know what the Liberals are saying? They're talking to the OPPA representatives and they're saying, "We support that, but it's other parts of the bill that we don't support." Then they go to the OPSEU members and say, "We oppose that bill."

When it comes to voting on different components of a bill and separating it out, I think there's only one group of people that is not willing to do that here. It's Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals. I would certainly support anything for more democracy in this Legislature. As I said before, I believe a responsible Legislature or a responsible government also requires a responsible opposition. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals are certainly not up to the job and they're not a credible and responsible opposition in this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Caplan:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe the member used unparliamentary language. He

made some comments about hypocrisy. I believe that's unparliamentary and that should be withdrawn.

**The Acting Speaker:** I didn't hear it. If the member did use anything unparliamentary, I would ask him to withdraw.

**Mr Mazzilli:** I did not use that word.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Caplan:** I certainly want to comment on the member from London-Fanshawe and his comments. I do understand that you'd be very comfortable with provisions in the budget. It has lifted a halfway measure from what was offered by the Canadian Alliance in the federal election, and quite frankly, that party and that idea were soundly rejected by the people of Ontario.

I do object to the fact that the Harris government doesn't have the guts to go to the people of Ontario and say, "This is our plan. This is our program. This is what we want to do. We stand solidly and firmly behind this, and if elected, we will do that." You see, that was never part of the conversation and the discussion in 1999, in the June 4 election here in the province of Ontario. I challenge the member and all of the members opposite, when they have said, when the Premier has said, when the Minister of Education has said—I'll read it into the record. I'll quote again from a letter written by Janet Ecker, Minister of Education, where she said, "While the government recognizes the right of parents to choose alternative forms of education for their children, it continues to have no plans to provide funding to private religious schools or to parents of children that attend such schools." Yet in the 2001 budget, that's exactly what they did.

Any responsible legislator, any responsible person who wants to seek elected office and has some plan to take these kinds of measures, a significant policy shift, should, surely to God, stand fully and firmly and say, "This is our plan and this is our program," and have the guts to do so.

Today there was a by-election announced in Vaughan-King-Aurora. I would say to the people there that you are going to have ministers of the crown and you're going to have the Premier come traipsing in making all kinds of policy statements, announcements and promises, but we know that they're fully prepared to shift those positions after the vote from what they say before the vote. I say to the people of Vaughan-King-Aurora, beware. Be very aware of what this government's track record is when it comes to prior to an election and after an election. They say one thing; they do another. As any responsible person will see, the record speaks for itself.

**Ms Martel:** I say to the member from London-Fanshawe, with all due respect, as he tries to convince the public that part VII of this bill is just a minor tax change and really doesn't fundamentally change how we fund public education, people are seeing through this. What you are proposing is a fundamental change to the way many governments have funded public education. We have not used public funds to support private schools in this province. We have not done that. Your govern-

ment proposes to do it under the guise of a tax bill along with hundreds of other changes in the hope that perhaps the public won't pick up on what you're doing or perhaps will think, as you do, that it's just part and parcel of some of the tax changes you've been making all along.

It seems to me that the public of Ontario, in the face of what really is a fundamental change to how we use public dollars, should have the right to be consulted. Even your predecessor, Bill Davis, who was responding to a constitutional right that Catholics had and an obligation of the government to fund, as a result of that constitutional right—even Bill Davis, in the face of that legal right, had full province-wide public hearings to allow people to have their say. Eighty days across this province is what the Liberals did after they were elected to ensure that people had their say on that bill.

I think you should do the same here. I think this bill has the potential to be very divisive, extremely divisive. I would encourage your government to separate this bill and have full public hearings so people can have their say.

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**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I think the fish-like flip-floppery of the member opposite from Don Valley East with respect to positions on issues is hilarious. If you want to go to the people and ask them to determine whether or not they think the Conservatives do and implement what they say they will or whether the Liberals flip-flop, I would be very open to that question being put to the public. I think the public would answer very clearly. I can list chapter and verse, rhyme off from red book to red book to pink book to blue book to paisley book that you people produced that absolutely contradicts positions you took.

This is the party that said in 1995, "We're in favour of tax cuts," and voted against every one of them. Every one of the tax cuts. This is the party of Gerard Kennedy down there, who said in the Bloor West Villager paper the day after the budget, "The Liberals say it's an issue of fairness. Private schools do have to be funded...." He said that in the newspaper. The education critic from the Liberal Party and his fearless leader, Dalton McGuinty, the kingfishy flip-flopper of all time, said, "It's just a matter of when and how." Well, when and how are you going to fund these schools? You said you're going to, you just don't know when or how, and Gerard Kennedy said it's a matter of fairness that you do that. Who's got two positions?

Then you produce a pamphlet that they're handing out to the people of the province of Ontario and you conveniently forget to put in there that you're going to withdraw this bill if you ever get elected to government. Why would you do that? We know why you did that. You don't want to tell the public what you're going to do. Why? You don't want to offend this group of voters at the expense of that group of voters, because you like to think you can get all the votes, and you've succeeded only in getting a lot fewer than we get.

**Mr Peters:** The member opposite talks about governments saying they're going to do something or not do something. Nobody ever said in the Blueprint that they were going to do this.

But I want to say in response to the member from London-Fanshawe that by including all private schools, the Harris government has in effect callously used religious minorities as a smokescreen to bring in a voucher system that will channel public funds to all private schools, including elite and for-profit institutions. A careful analysis of the actual tax credit clearly demonstrates that the primary beneficiaries are those who send their children to secular institutions. The finance minister has said the new provincial tax credit will apply strictly to the academic portion of tuition. The credit will be 50% of the amount up to a maximum of \$5,000 when fully phased in. On the religious portion of the tuition there are existing tax benefits as charitable donations, and the minister has been adamant there will be no mixing of these benefits with the proposed tax credit.

The majority of Ontario's private schools are small operations, charging \$4,000 to \$9,000 per year, and about two thirds of those private schools are faith-based schools. Ed Morgan of the Canadian Jewish Congress calculates that the benefit is generally worth only \$600 or \$700 on tuition of around \$7,000 a year per student. However, for strictly secular for-profit schools, a maximum of up to \$3,500 can be benefited.

This is strictly unacceptable. You want to talk about dealing with the issue of fairness and equity? Then let's have a full discussion on this. Let's not bring something out in a budget. Let's strike an all-party committee and deal with this issue once and for all, because what you're doing here is using the religious schools in this province as a smokescreen, and that's a very dangerous thing. You're pulling the wool over their eyes and it's a very sad day for what you've done to those parents who have worked hard for their children's education.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for London-Fanshawe has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Mazzilli:** I think certainly the Minister of Labour summed this up very nicely. No matter what tax cut the Mike Harris government comes up with, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals will vote against it. And that's exactly what they're doing here: they're voting against a small tax credit or tax cut for hard-working families that have chosen to send their children to some sort of alternative education.

This is not a surprise: it's a continuation of over 100 tax cuts in the province of Ontario that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals have failed to vote for. They feel that by voting against tax cuts they're somehow representing working families. I've said it before and I'll continue saying it: until they come up with the policies for working families, it would suggest that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals wouldn't know a working family if they tripped over them. I will continue to say that, because there's no evidence in any of their policies that suggests they're going to help working families.

The first thing I suspect they should do is come clean and provide a budget. What would a Dalton McGuinty budget look like? We've provided our budget; Mr Flaherty has provided the budget bill, Bill 45. It lays out clearly what the rules in the province of Ontario are. The rules are certainly more tax cuts to generate more government revenue for health care and for education, which we have done in this budget. Yet all we can hear from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals are attacks on every part of this legislation that helps out working families. Certainly I would suspect that tomorrow the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London and his leader will come up and suggest what this province should spend to assist farmers, what they should spend for education, what they should spend for health.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

It being 9:30 by some clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 am, May 31, 2001.

*The House adjourned at 2127.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
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Don Valley West / -Ouest	<b>Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David</b> (PC) Solicitor General / solliciteur général	Lanark-Carleton	<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne</b> (PC) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
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Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premiers et derniers numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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No. 22

Nº 22

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario  
Second Session, 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario  
Deuxième session, 37<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 31 May 2001

Jeudi 31 mai 2001

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 31 May 2001

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 31 mai 2001

*The House met at 1000.*

*Prayers.*

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT WORKERS

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** I move that, in the opinion of this House, since special education support workers make an important contribution to the education and overall physical and mental well-being of special-needs students, immediate measures should be taken to declare special education support workers an essential service during work stoppages to provide special education programs and services at all times to students who have been identified as special-needs students.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka has up to 10 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr Miller:** In my first month of elected office representing the people of Parry Sound-Muskoka, there was a support workers strike in the Near North District School Board. I received hundreds of letters, e-mails, faxes and telephone calls from concerned constituents to do with this strike. Most were asking that support workers be deemed an essential service. This resolution originates from the need in my riding, as well as the rest of the province, to consider special education support workers an essential service.

In Ontario, many children who have special needs may require special education services in order to enable them to attend school where they learn life skills from their educational experience. Special education support workers play a pivotal role in the life of exceptional students and their families. Exceptional students rely on their support workers for all manner of personal tasks that most of us take for granted. Because of the nature of educational assistants' duties, many can be classified as nursing duties, which are essential in the province of Ontario.

Students with physical disabilities who need help with personal hygiene rely on assistants to help them in the washroom. Some students rely on assistants to help feed them. Special education support workers may even be required to administer medication. Students who are non-verbal rely on their assistant to help them communicate.

Students who are hearing impaired or visually impaired rely on their assistant to help them with the most fundamental tasks in the classroom and around the school. Without these special education support workers many exceptional students cannot function in Ontario schools.

Imagine for a moment a student with a severe physical disability who is unable to perform their daily activities independently, such as eating, speaking or walking. These students require the constant support of assistants to help them with these everyday life skills in order to pursue their goals in all aspects of their education.

I have spoken with numerous constituents who told me that support workers are essential in delivering quality and specialized care to help special-needs children reach their full educational potential. These assistants deliver the care and services that are essential to the lives of special-needs children. Disruption of these services has proven to be harmful to the well-being and everyday life of exceptional students and their families. That is why I feel the services of these workers should be considered essential for special-needs children. Without them, exceptional students are unable to reach their full educational potential. Many cannot even attend school.

The recent Near North District School Board support workers' strike in my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka demonstrated how the withdrawal of school services is disruptive and impacts on the learning process of exceptional students. One of my constituents, Gail Mayhew of Nobel, spoke to me about her grandson, who is autistic. His schooling was disrupted for four weeks during the recent Near North support workers strike. Since Gail's grandson was identified as a special-needs student he has made a great deal of progress with the help of his educational assistant. However, during the recent strike, Gail's grandson suffered major setbacks in his overall progress. The strike was extremely disruptive to his learning, as it was to all children in similar situations. In fact, many of these children were recently told to stay away from school when their support workers were on strike because their safety in school could not be assured.

If I could quote from an article in the Toronto Star, dated May 21, 2001, written by David Lepofsky, chair of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee, "An effective Ontarians with Disabilities Act would achieve barrier-free education from kindergarten through university. No special-needs students should again suffer the second-class treatment meted out during last month's Toronto school strike. Most kids without disabilities went to school; special-needs kids were told to stay home."

It is unacceptable that special-needs children were discriminated against in this way. However, assistants were not available to look after these exceptional children as they were on strike.

The most effective way to ensure special-needs students receive this needed care is to declare the work of their assistants essential. As we have seen recently in Toronto, without the special education support workers, these children cannot attend school. They are totally excluded, despite legislation that assures them equal access to regular schools.

In a Toronto Sun article dated Friday April 13, 2001, entitled "Disabled Kids are 'Victims,' Hurt by Strike: Parents," it states:

"Thousands of special-needs students have become the forgotten victims of the public school workers' strike...."

"Thousands of kids were left without at-school care when 1,600 educational and health care aides walked out with other CUPE 4400 members.... The Toronto District School Board sent letters to the parents of 26,000 special-needs kids advising many of them to keep their kids home for their own safety...."

"Susan Yewchuk, whose 11-year old son is autistic, says two classes of kids have been created."

Kathy Deschenes's son, who also is autistic, had to stay home during the strike while his brother attended school. She states, "My son without special needs came home with a letter saying it's business as usual, while another memo for parents of special education students tells them to keep their kids home."

School boards affected by the strike determined that their principals and teachers could simply not provide the extensive special services that these children need, and I have no doubt that the school boards were quite right. Our schools cannot serve exceptional students without the services of special education support workers.

I had the opportunity to talk to parents of special-needs children in my riding recently. The mother of one child told me how difficult it is to arrange care for her son when he is not in school. A regular babysitter will not do. The caregiver has to be able to provide specialized services specific to the child and has to know just the right way to communicate with him.

#### 1010

When school services are suddenly withdrawn from these children, parents cannot easily make alternative arrangements. Even older children cannot be left at home alone. When educational assistants withdraw services to these children, the impact on them is far-reaching. Parents who cannot make adequate arrangements for their children must stay home to look after them. They lose time from work and money from their family's budgets.

Special education support workers aid students with many different exceptionailities: students with intellectual differences; students with auditory or visual problems, communication disorders, physical disabilities, behavioural disorders and developmental disabilities. The service provided to some of our special-needs students by their assistants must not be underestimated. It is essential.

My resolution today is focused on those exceptional students who need an educational assistant in order to attend school along with their peers. The most vulnerable children in the province have been barred from our schools because their assistants were not there to ensure their safety. This is the worst form of discrimination, because it targets an already disadvantaged group of our citizens.

I attended the annual meeting of RISE last weekend in Parry Sound. RISE is an organization that advocates for people with disabilities and is affiliated with the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres. My meetings with RISE have given me some insight into the challenges people with disabilities face in their daily lives—every minute of their daily lives.

Teachers in my riding who have special-needs students in their classrooms have told me how important assistants are in their classrooms. Much of their program must be modified and adapted for an exceptional student. His or her ability to function in the classroom often depends on having one-on-one supervision and help from their assistant.

Society's most vulnerable children have been discriminated against by not allowing them to attend schools when special education support workers are on strike. Let's not allow this to happen again.

Special education support workers provide an environment for all special-needs students to be integrated with all students. Special-needs students are unable to succeed or even function without the continuous support of these special education support workers. These people are essential to the everyday lives of exceptional students, and they should not under any circumstances be denied this service.

Therefore, on behalf of the people of Parry Sound Muskoka, I am calling on the government to adopt this resolution.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'm pleased to join the debate. The member has brought an important issue before us. Certainly our young people with special needs face unique difficulties in labour disruptions, and one needs to find solutions to the problem.

I used to be chairman of a school board. I was on a school board for 11 years, including chair for several years, here in the city of Toronto and have some understanding of the needs of special students.

I would say one of the most important steps that's been taken over the last 20 years, probably, is the move to increasingly integrate students with special needs into the total classroom. Virtually every school board now works very hard to make sure that our students with special needs are made, as much as possible, part of the regular classroom, and I truly applaud that.

When I was chairman of the school board in Toronto, we used to have unique schools, segregated, for—at that time they were called schools for the retarded; luckily that name changed. Really through the work of the parents we recognized that those young people best develop and grow within the regular schools; and that's

happened to a very large extent to the credit, as I say, of the parents and, I think, of the enlightened school boards across the province.

My first question on this issue is, is this a step backward in terms of ensuring to the best of our ability that all young people are made, to the maximum extent, part of the same environment? I say there is a risk in this motion that once again our special education students are treated differently. Offsetting that, of course, is the need, during a labour disruption, to make certain that these young people are safe and secure, and looked after and aided properly.

The second thing I would say about the issue of essentially taking away the right to strike for these employees is that there are some areas I agree with the Premier on. He said recently that taking away the right to strike for the teachers may very well not lessen the disruption but increase it. He's been around for some time in the education field, as I have. I think he was actually a school trustee about the same time I was, in the 1970s and early 1980s. He remembers, as I do, that before teachers had the right to strike there were significant disruptions going on but there was no mechanism to really deal with them, because they were essentially work to rule. The reason the then Davis government introduced legislation giving the teachers the right to strike, I believe in 1975, was a recognition that that perhaps was the best way of bringing disputes to a resolution. The Premier very recently said that, and I agree with that.

The member for Muskoka is suggesting that in this case we remove that right. I'd say that before one does that, we have to say, therefore, how do we resolve those disputes? By taking away the right to strike, would we simply be adding to the disruption for our young people or taking away from it? The Premier today just said we would be adding to the disruption.

I think during the last few months we've seen that where there is a long-standing dispute between support workers and school boards that has gone on for a considerable period of time and where the students' education year may be in jeopardy, there may be a need to consider legislation that would deal with that. As we all know, where there's a situation involving teachers and a long-term labour dispute, there is a legislative mechanism for dealing with that. There isn't one where we happen to be involved in a dispute with support workers, and perhaps there's a need to deal with that.

The next point I'd like to make is that at the root of the disruptions between the support staff and the school boards is a lack of funding. I reject totally the contention that provincial support for education has gone up. I would just say to the members to look at the budget. In 1998-99, the province provided \$7.7 billion of support for school boards. Today the province is providing \$8.5 billion. But we must recognize, first, that \$500 million of that money that is now in operating support from the province previously was in the capital budget. The province has completely changed the way it funds capital now, and \$500 million of operating grants go to paying

principal and interest costs on money that school boards have borrowed to build schools. That's \$500 million that's now in the operating budget that never used to be there. It's a neat accounting trick. It's a way to essentially get debt off the books.

**1020**

The school boards now have about \$3 billion of brand new debt hidden over there off the province's books that used to be on the province's books, because the province used to fund school construction out of provincial resources. Now they say, "School boards, you go borrow the money." So \$500 million of the grants from the province to school boards goes to paying principal and interest on money they've had to borrow to build schools.

Then the province said, "We're going to cut property taxes by \$600 million and we're going to replace it with increased grants." The \$600 million is supposed to be cut from property taxes and the province will increase by \$600 million in spending, and \$500 million in operating grants will go to pay the principal and interest on money school boards have borrowed to build schools. There's \$1.1 billion.

I contend, and I challenge any government member to prove this wrong, that four years ago the province was providing roughly \$7.7 billion in support to school boards. Today, on an apples-to-apples basis, it's \$7.3 billion. The only way they can show an increase is by saying, "We're now funding capital out of operating."

**Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe):** Tell us what Dalton's going to provide.

**Mr Phillips:** I hear the member for London, who loves to heckle and seldom likes to listen. I would say to the member for London that the province is strangling the school system. You want to know where the real problem came up in Muskoka? It was because the Muskoka school board didn't have the money to provide for the support workers. You want to know the problem in the city of Toronto? Every year the city of Toronto is getting less money to spend on people in the city of Toronto. That's why they had a major dispute at the secondary schools.

If you want to know what the real facts are, member for London, you should be talking to the Minister of Education and saying, "We have to stop strangling our school boards." The problem the member for Muskoka ran into was that that school board simply did not have the resources to pay for those support workers. Who paid for it? I'll tell you who paid for it. Those students who were out of school week after week. There's what you should be yelling about, member for London. Yell at the Minister of Finance to solve the problems. You're attacking the messenger when you should be attacking the problem.

It's the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance who have strangled school boards so they don't have the funds. I know that for a fact in the city of Toronto. Today communities can't use schools. We're closing pools because there's no money. The support workers finally reached a resolution of their dispute, and

then the school board had to lay off hundreds and hundreds of employees because they can't fund the settlement.

Member for London, as you love to yell in the Legislature, I suggest you spend a little bit of your time talking to the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance and finding some real solutions rather than simply yelling all the time.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of the resolution put forward by the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka. He's bringing forth to this Legislature an issue that was very significant in his riding. I compliment the new member for doing that, particularly a member who just won an election this past winter and is doing an excellent job here in the Legislature at Queen's Park.

The essence of this resolution is right here, that education support workers make an important contribution to the education and overall physical and medical well-being of special-needs students. I think too often that is overlooked, the tremendous contribution these people make to the education system, particularly to those special-needs students. Recent events, both in the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, as well as what has happened here in Toronto with the strike of support workers, have absolutely been disheartening for those special-needs students. Listening to the concerns out there, it was very devastating to those particular young people. Some of them do not really understand what is happening, and I think it's very unfair that such students are put through that.

I agree with the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka that it's time our government review what is indeed an essential service. I know it's subjective, but there is no question in our minds, when it comes to services such as paramedics or police or firefighters, that those should be essential services, but what other services are essential? As I said, I recognize that it is a subjective opinion as to what should be and what shouldn't be.

I'd like to point out the fact that our government is indeed committed to the needs of these special students. If you look at the budget last year, it was up 17% from 1998-99. In 1999-2000, it was at \$1.2 billion; that was an increase of some \$32.5 million from the year before. Then we see in the budget this year some \$1.37 billion. That is a lot of money. We're also seeing some \$4 million to expand the support workers for special needs.

The real story that lies behind these numbers is what happens to these special-needs students when a strike occurs. Here in Toronto, those special-needs students were told to stay at home while the other students went to school. This is really segregation and it's something those students cannot understand or appreciate. It was a little different in Parry Sound-Muskoka, where the schools were simply shut down because of this particular strike. These young people have to learn basic life skills, things like personal hygiene, and these kinds of interruptions are really disastrous to their training programs. Again, it's something they don't understand.

I've always had a lot of trouble with strikes and lockouts from both sides. It seems to me a rather barbaric way of settling wage negotiations and arriving at a collective agreement. I'm sure if the minds sat down we could come up with a better way of dealing with this, but at this time we're still dealing with strikes and lockouts. Because of this, I think we really have to sit down and look at what is an essential service. Is teaching an essential service? Is nursing an essential service? Are physicians an essential service? I think the list can go on.

In closing, I'd like to address some of the comments made by the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. He seems to have all the answers on education funding. I know he sits on the standing committee on finance and has a lot of insight. Nevertheless, I look back to when he and his party were in government. During their five years, there were good times in Ontario, certainly not because of their policies. But what happened? The spending doubled. They claimed the budget was balanced one year, but it was only because of innovative accounting methods. When Bob Rae came to office he said he wanted to be the Premier in the worst way and that's exactly how he got it—in the worst way, after five years of Liberal government in Ontario.

Coming back to the resolution before this House put forward by the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, I enthusiastically support it and compliment him for bringing it forward.

1030

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** I want start by complimenting the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, again because of the very sound and rational way in which he tries to present the case for being very concerned about this issue of declaring special educational service providers as an essential service.

I want to refer to my personal background as the principal of a school before the 1999 election and explain to the public out there that although the intention of the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka might be to try to declare that special-ed providers are very essential and very important to our system—I have to ask the member, was he on my board, particularly my school, where I had to tell eight parents that because of the funding formula their child would no longer receive the special-needs assistance they needed to progress in my school? The year before, those students were receiving that special-needs assistance by those very special-needs assistants. Today I will announce that yesterday the board in my municipality had to make the decision of cutting special-needs providers. Why? Because the funding is not there.

The game and the fallacy that the ISA grants are getting bigger and bigger—they've shrunk. They raised the bar for the grants provided to hire those workers. The bar to qualify as a special-needs student was raised so high, they saved millions and millions of dollars by saying those special-needs students had to have that much more of a problem before we provide them with assistance in the very classrooms I had to vacate to take this job.

I am offended that this gentleman stands up today and says, "We are after better special education and we want to declare them special needs, and because of that we're going to make sure they're there." Are we talking about daycare services or are we talking about an essential service that those students need to progress in our educational system? I am offended that this gentleman thinks that by making this resolution and having us here agree that they shouldn't be allowed to leave that school, those students are going to be better served by it. Quite frankly, the funding formula ripped from the heart of those students the ability to have those workers there.

There are fewer educational assistants in our system than when this government took power. What did they do? They played a game at the expense of these special-needs students and their parents—the tears in their eyes when I had to announce to them as principal of my school that their child would no longer qualify to get the special help they deserved to be an equal partner in the educational system. It was ripped from them because this government had to save money at their expense. We're not even talking about the \$1.2 billion that this government took from that. We're not talking about the continuing downloading to school boards and ripping from them the responsibility for making sure those students receive that special help.

The unfortunate case is that I had to face those parents eye to eye and say, "I am truly, truly sorry." The hours and hours of paperwork you made us go through to qualify those students, to prove to you they needed help—that was ripped from us, because you raised the bar to even allow us to give them those educational assistants. Shame on you for trying to play a game at the expense of those students who now don't have that special-needs help they so desperately need. We demand that you return that to them.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):** I'm very pleased to join in the resolution put forth by my colleague Norm Miller. Comments have been made by members of the opposition, particularly the member for Brant and the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. I want to focus on the comments of these members shortly. But what the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka—

**Mr Tascona:** Mr Speaker, I can't hear.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. The member for Niagara Centre is not in his seat. And the government members would know it's probably not good to be heckling your own member.

**Mr Tascona:** The focus of this is obviously to address the needs of special-needs students in terms of a labour strike. We have the reality of the situation that there was differential treatment during these labour disputes. The bottom line here is that the member from Scarborough-Agincourt obviously is very pro-right-to-strike for teachers and in the educational system. That's the bottom line. He's not only pro right-to-strike in the educational system; he also feels that the only way to have labour peace is to throw money at it. That's basically his solution. He doesn't want to look at accountability for school

boards. He doesn't want to look at standards in education to make sure we have quality education. When you read through the lines here, he says, "We need more money. That'll bring about labour peace." More money brings labour peace. He's pro right-to-strike in the educational sector, regardless of the cost.

But the thing I really take offence at—we heard a lot from the member for Brant about how he was offended, and I can't believe he has the disposition to say that. I wish I could say it to his face, but he's not here. But the bottom line is, he's offended by the resolution.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** Point of order—

**The Deputy Speaker:** You'll withdraw the comment about attendance.

**Mr Tascona:** I withdraw that. I'd like to say it to his face. He's offended by the resolution. On what basis would he be offended by this resolution? Anyone who is coming forth here with that pompous attitude doesn't understand what's going on in reality. I think the member for Scarborough-Agincourt put forth that there's a risk they'd be treated differently. There isn't a risk here, member for Scarborough-Agincourt. The reality is, they were treated differently.

The thing that was put forth here, in the column that was written by David Lepofsky, in terms of how they were treated—special education students were told to stay home during the Toronto strike. I say for the member from Muskoka, as we've recently seen in Toronto, without the special education support workers these children could not attend school. The Sun article states, "Disabled kids are victims hurt by the strike." They were the forgotten victims of this public workers' strike. That's the reality. They were treated differently because of the inability to solve the labour problem. It wasn't about money. The bottom line is, we're dealing with a labour relations issue here.

What the member is putting forth in his resolution is to remove that right to strike, because the reality is they were treated differently. The member opposite from Scarborough-Agincourt is pro right-to-strike. He says, "Throw all the money you want at this, but at the same time treat them differently. Treat the special kids differently." So their position on special education, in terms of dealing with labour strife, would be to throw money at it in terms of, "We're still going to have that labour strife, and you'll be treated differently, but the bottom line is, make sure the right to strike for education remains."

We're looking at the funding issue, and I want to be very clear about this: there have been significant increases in special education funding. We have made it very clear that you can't take money out of special education and put it into hiring more 'educrats.' Special education funding has increased, we've brought accountability into special education funding, and we've made sure that school boards can't take the money out of special education. So the comments about where special education funding goes are not only unfounded, but the bottom line here is that the member for Parry Sound-

Muskoka is bringing about a resolution to deal with a serious problem where there's been outright discrimination by the school boards against special education children, and the only solution to maintain the education system intact is arbitration to resolve these issues, not the right to strike.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I want people to understand what just happened here. I saw the member for London-Fanshawe stand up to speak to this resolution; he even put his jacket on. What happened? Did his caucus let him speak? No. The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton bullies his way in, proverbially knocks him aside—

**Mr Tascona:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I was trying to speak in the House. The member was out of his seat, and I couldn't even speak to you because I couldn't hear. He knows that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** That's not a point of order.

**Mr Kormos:** Thank you, Speaker. So what happens? The member for London-Fanshawe stands up and tries to utilize his responsibility to speak to issues. Lord knows, he doesn't get a chance very often. His caucus has kept the member for London-Fanshawe on a pretty short leash. The member for London-Fanshawe finally figures he's got his chance to talk about this resolution—this union-busting, anti-labour, pro-scab resolution—and the member for London-Fanshawe gets brushed aside, body-checked by the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton. Shame. Scandalous.

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So here we are. I was interested in hearing—I'm not sure: as a matter of fact I'll tell you I'm quite convinced I wouldn't agree with what the member for London-Fanshawe had to say. But, Lord knows, his folks have a right to have their member speak too. I protest the effort on the part of the government caucus to exclude the member for London-Fanshawe from this debate. I insist he be given an opportunity to speak to this resolution. I'm eager to hear what the member for London-Fanshawe has to say.

Let's understand what this resolution is all about. Of course special-ed support workers are critical. Every member of the educational community is critical to the maintenance of a healthy educational system. The author of this resolution says they're so important. Of course they are. If they're so important, why aren't they being paid accordingly? If they're so important, why aren't they being supplied to classrooms in appropriate numbers? If they're so darned important, as they are, then why doesn't this government do more, as it can and could have, specifically and most recently during the strike by CUPE workers here in Toronto? Why didn't this government do more to make sure the boards of education—in this past instance, most specifically, the Toronto board of education—had adequate funding so that strike could have been settled, indeed so that strike could have been averted?

Let's recall that those support workers were merely seeking the same percentage—not dollar value, but per-

centage—salary increase that had earlier been granted without a strike to teachers by that same board. The demands of those workers were not in any way, shape or form extravagant. This government didn't do anything to ensure the Toronto District School Board could avert that strike. The member who authors this resolution didn't speak up in this Legislature calling upon his government to pay back—what was it; how many hundreds of thousands a day were being kicked back into government coffers while those workers were on strike that the government could have returned to the board so the board could have properly funded the fair but modest salary increase those support workers were seeking? Where were you? Why weren't you speaking out then? Why are you now standing in this Legislature telling us that yet another group of working women and men have to lose their right to strike? That's what this is all about.

**Interjection:** He's pro-strike.

**Mr Kormos:** What more fundamental right can there be in a democratic society—

**Interjection:** He likes strikes.

**Mr Kormos:** Please, Speaker—than the right for working women and men, regardless of whether the workplace is an industrial workplace, a rural workplace, an agricultural workplace or whether it's in schools and within the educational family, to withdraw their labour? It's unbelievable.

Only yesterday, when this government rammed through its closure motion—I understand why Tory backbenchers are not accustomed to speaking to bills. It's because this government uses closure so frequently. I want you to understand, member for London-Fanshawe, that I've insisted you be given an opportunity to speak to this.

**Mr Mazzilli:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask for unanimous consent that the member for Niagara share his time with me. I would like to speak.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Do we have unanimous consent? No. It's not granted.

I want to tell you right now—stop the clock—this is private members' hour. Everything is timed. I don't want to have any abuse of the rules. Let's just try to treat this as it is: it's private members' hour.

**Mr Kormos:** I understand the member for London-Fanshawe's desperation. I understand that he has to appeal to opposition parties to assist him to get time to speak on the resolution by his very seatmate. We saw what happened a few minutes ago when he stood, rose to attempt to speak to it. He got bodychecked by one of his own colleagues. I understand his desperation but I tell you it's something he's got to deal with within his own caucus. He's got to talk to his whip and his House leader. He's got to appeal to his Premier. He's got to rely upon his constituents to write letters, send faxes and e-mails saying, "Let our member speak." People from London-Fanshawe, e-mail the Premier and say, "Let our member speak." I'm doing the best I can to help him. I've already insisted that this government give the member from London-Fanshawe a chance to speak, because when he

tried to speak he was checked aside, shoved aside by one of his colleagues, who makes more money than he does.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Well, he does. Do you want me to identify the sources of the income? I'll leave it at that. I should identify the sources of income, but that's a matter for another debate, isn't it?

Scab legislation: let's understand that we've had more contentious strike actions in this province since this government was elected and since their repeal of the anti-scab legislation than we've seen literally in decades, than we've seen, I put to you, since the 1930s and even the 1940s when we saw the birth of the trade union movement here in the province of Ontario.

I understand why this government wants to take away the right to strike for any worker. I understand why it wants to take away the right to strike for education support workers, because the education support workers stood together in solidarity with their sisters and brothers as they took on not only their own board, but as they took on this government, because of this government's scuttling of public education, with all of the manifestations of that.

You see, that was but one of the manifestations of this government's attack on publicly funded education. We see a backbencher being used to—what is it? It's the old trial balloon syndrome. Let the balloon rise and see what kind of response there is. First, we'll start with the special-ed support workers and then maybe, as was contemplated—do you remember the contemplation, the amplified thinking, if it could fairly be called that, about maybe eliminating the right to strike for all of the support worker community, maybe eliminating the right to strike for custodians, for the people who keep our schools clean, hard-working women and men who don't make very much, just like special-ed support workers don't make a whole lot of money either?

I've been in those classrooms. I've been in those classrooms down in Niagara region and other parts of the province. I've been in those classrooms down in Welland, Thorold, St Catharines and Pelham. I've spent time. I've sat there and watched teachers at the elementary level, and yes, even at the high school level but most acutely at the elementary school level, deal with special-needs kids, ranging from modest levels of needs to some very serious and complex levels of needs. I've watched those teachers accommodate those kids, care for them, love them and teach them, help them learn, help them grow.

I've watched teachers do that with the assistance of support workers in their classroom and I've watched teachers who have been denied that assistance. I've watched as teachers cart into the classroom early in the morning construction paper, crayons, pencils and other school supplies that they've purchased out of their own pockets.

**1050**

I've similarly joined those teachers and their students and their students' families on Saturday mornings and

Saturday afternoons and Friday evenings when they have so-called fun fairs, the sole purpose of which is to raise money to support day-to-day classroom activities in their school. Ross school in Welland holds a minimum of three a year. It's not about having fun; it's about raising money, a nickel, a dime and a quarter at a time, being happy if a Saturday morning bake sale and flea market sort of thing manages to raise a couple of hundred bucks, because maybe they can buy a couple of books for the library, or maybe they can buy some of the arts and crafts supplies that are an integral part of kids' educational programs, or maybe they can buy some of the very sophisticated and specialized learning tools that are available for all kids, including kids with special needs, because "special needs" means precisely that—you've got special needs.

I've watched those same support workers do their jobs and do them in a caring, professional way. By God, you don't take away their right to strike, you don't punish them for being among the lowest-paid people in the educational community, notwithstanding that they equal any others in their level of commitment, their level of professionalism, and yes indeed, with respect to their specialization, their level of training.

This is just another manifestation of this government's hell-bent commitment to union-busting, its hell-bent commitment to destroying free collective bargaining here in Ontario. It knows the Charter of Rights doesn't permit it to ban trade unions, so it will do it through the back door. It'll eliminate the right to strike, or for the right to strike that exists it'll legislate workers back to work, making the right to strike irrelevant, and it will, by legislation, designate more and more workers as essential workers. Yes, that's coming to the floor of this Legislature very soon when it comes to paramedics, ambulance workers and this government's attack on the SEIU, CUPE and OPSEU workers who provide those ambulance services, once again effectively eliminating the right to strike.

I've got a message for the author of this bill and for the Premier: you don't legislate essential workers if you believe in free collective bargaining; you negotiate it. Let me tell you, let this member or anybody else on the government bench come up with a single instance of a special-ed support worker who has ever been anything less than thoroughly, totally committed to the welfare, the learning and the care of the kids who are in their care and who their job is to assist during the course of a school day and beyond—one single instance.

This is a shameful attack, because it's an attack not only on the special-ed support workers; it's an attack on the kids those support workers are committed to, because those kids, like all of our kids, deserve teachers, teachers' aides and support workers who are fairly paid, who are respected by this government and who have the basic democratic rights any worker should have, ought to have and does have in a truly democratic society.

This government committed itself some chunk of time ago to creating a crisis in education and, by God, it's

done it, and it's going to pursue it. It's going to pursue public education, drive it into the ground and drive its workers into the ground, be it support workers or teachers, until it destroys public education so it can sustain and use public dollars to finance its private for-profit school system.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** It's my pleasure to speak on behalf of the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka's resolution this morning, specifically declaring special education support workers as an essential service. The point's been established, I believe, that when we're speaking of children with special needs, particularly health needs, and physical support workers of the particular group we're talking about, it could be considered discrimination. It's not as in the cases where other children may also be disrupted by work stoppages in our schools. This is a particularly unique case, with children who are being deprived of the essential supports they need, in many cases to survive. The educational component is in addition to the support workers' role.

I think he makes a very good point. Today, as you know, it is illegal for health care workers to strike. There is a dispute mechanism, an arbitration process, where there are collective bargaining agreements reached without the need of a strike which does, in this case, affect vulnerable children.

A little bit of history, but first I want to mention that this morning I had the privilege of opening a two-day symposium on fetal alcohol syndrome, FAS, in Durham. A former neighbour and friend of mine, Marion Cook, has worked tirelessly from the early 1990s to have recognition of fetal alcohol syndrome as a precipitous ailment that may affect special education children. ADHD—attention deficit hyperactivity disorder—and others—there is a growing demand for special education services.

I would say, respectfully, that members of my family were special education instructors, speech and language pathologists. I chaired special education for about four years and am very supportive and sympathetic to this need.

The history should be examined here because for years the process of identifying children with special needs was called an IPR, an identification, placement and review program. That was often delayed for many years, until about grade 3 or 4, because once the child is identified, the service must be provided. So often it was delayed, delayed, delayed, and the supports were not put in place. When we encouraged the student focus funding model and identified ISA, intensive support amount, etc, we were attempting to make sure that the money for special ed is frozen.

I want to summarize that I understand the NDP's position. They are in favour of, and indeed encourage, strikes in our schools, which affects our children. Second, I'm suspicious of the Liberals' position because you can't trust them. It's a case that they don't keep their promises.

The member from Parry Sound-Muskoka has made a commitment. He's stated in public that he puts students first.

I also have more to say but the history does show that Dalton McGuinty is also opposed to the right to strike. That is on the record, it's permanent and it's something that should be followed up on.

Out of respect for the member from London-Fanshawe, I want to save him exactly one moment to redeem himself, because he's a member of great respect in this House.

**Mr Mazzilli:** It's a pleasure to speak to this resolution. The member for Niagara Centre has laid out the NDP position, of everyone's right to strike to get a collective agreement. And what do we have? Often, back-to-work legislation in this Legislature. The NDP has been consistent, under the leadership of Howard Hampton, in saying, "No, back-to-work legislation is not the way to go."

Where do the Liberals stand on it? Well, one day they vote for it and one day they vote against it. When it comes to our budgets, the NDP often support the Centre for Social Justice, which comes out with an alternative budget, and it is something to put forward to the people of Ontario. Where are Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals? What is the proper funding for education? What is the proper funding for health care? What is the proper funding for farmers? I have yet to hear that and I demand that we hear that from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response? The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka has two minutes.

**Mr Miller:** I'd like to thank the members who commented this morning on this resolution: the member from Scarborough-Agincourt, the member from Brant, the member from Niagara Centre, the members from Northumberland, Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton and Durham, and lastly, the member from London-Fanshawe.

I'd like to comment that the member from Scarborough-Agincourt was talking more about teachers striking. This is not to do with teachers striking; it's to do with special education support workers for those special education students.

He talked about funding, and I'd like to point out that the funding for special education programs has increased 17% since 1999, and we are now investing, this year, \$1.37 billion in special education in Ontario—a very big commitment to special education.

The member from Brant was talking about programs to do with special education. The Minister of Education announced comprehensive new plans on January 27, 2000, to do with special education, and we have a good plan in effect for special education.

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The member from Niagara Centre was talking about his pro-union position. With his usual theatrics, which he's very good at, he was talking about the rights of union members. I happen to believe that the rights of special-needs children and students are more important than wage negotiations. Also, I'd like to point out that

normally with arbitration the history is that wage settlements tend to be higher than with negotiated settlements. So it should be to the benefit of the special education workers.

The key point here, though, is that the needs of these special education students are of the utmost importance and they are just too disrupted when a strike occurs. We must put the needs of these special education students first.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The time for debating this ballot item has now expired. I will put the questions relating to it at 12 o'clock noon.

### DOCTORS' SERVICES SERVICES DE SANTÉ

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** I move that in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario immediately develop and implement an emergency plan to address the critical shortage of family physicians in rural Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** The member for Renfrew has 10 minutes.

**Mr Conway:** I rise today on behalf of my constituents in rural eastern Ontario to address a matter of urgent and pressing necessity, namely, the fact that I am hearing more and more from people living in rural Ontario generally—and I speak as a member from rural eastern Ontario—and from my constituents living in communities like Cobden, Beachburg, La Passe, Douglas, Eganville, Griffith, Matawachan and several other small communities that they simply are having a very real difficulty accessing or retaining the services of a family physician.

And it's not just in my part of eastern Ontario. I noticed the other day in the *Globe and Mail* some comments from Dr Ken Hook, who is the president of the Ontario College of Family Physicians. Dr Hook is a family practitioner in southwestern Ontario, according to this report, a 55-year-old doctor in Tavistock, Oxford county. Let me just quote what Dr Hook said: "The figures aren't good and what the public has told us is really quite shocking. It really shows that something has to be done fast."

I think Dr Hook speaks not just for his own society of family practitioners but certainly for most of the constituents who have spoken to me in my community. We know, according to the data, that our population is aging. In my part of eastern Ontario, we have some of the highest older populations anywhere in the province. If you're in an area like the Eganville-Douglas-Cobden-Beachburg area, it's a very rural part of eastern Ontario. The populations there are older than average. There is no public transit. There is a lot of winter weather.

Let me just tell this Legislature that people in that part of central Renfrew county—do you know how they are getting access to family practitioners? We've got, at Beachburg, two physicians coming over on a regular

basis from Shawville, Quebec, staffing the Beachburg Medical Centre; good people providing excellent service. These are physicians whose hospital privileges are at the Pontiac Hospital in Shawville, Quebec. So more and more of my constituents in that part of Renfrew country are going over to Quebec to get their hospital services.

It's not an easy problem, and I want to say that the Ontario government has done a number of things for which I applaud them, but these are small steps to deal with, as Dr Hook has said, an urgent problem.

I want to also make plain that in rural Ontario there are issues having to do with lifestyle. I've been through this debate for many years and there's no question that there are some lifestyle issues that have to be taken account of as we look at good public policy in terms of future physician recruitment.

There are demographic issues, not just for the general population but for our physicians. The average age of family practitioners in this province, particularly in rural small-town Ontario, is rising sharply. We know, for example, that one of the real problems many people are experiencing is that when their long-time family practitioner retires in some of these communities, it's virtually impossible to find a local replacement unless we can bring new resources into the community.

We also, quite frankly, have to take into account the feminization of the medical profession, which is a very good thing. But the medical schools are clearly going to have to graduate a substantially greater number of graduates to get to the same number of full-time equivalence because, happily, the young women who are graduating into the world of medical practice in most cases want to have and raise children. That has got to be understood in a way that I don't think we've understood it before.

What is to be done? In an area like the Cobden-Beachburg area of my constituency there's an excellent community group, the Whitewater-Bromley Community Health Centre group, with people such as Dave Shields and Bonny Johnson and scores of very dedicated community volunteers who have been working valiantly for the last number of months and years to find a solution to their problem. A very well regarded, long-time family practitioner died in the village of Cobden a couple of years ago. For that vacancy, there is still no replacement.

One of the solutions clearly is to expand the community health centre concept. It's not going to be the solution for everyone, but I can tell you in the Cobden-Beachburg area of my constituency we believe it is a solution. That community group that has worked so hard, raised public monies and public consciousness now has a number of physicians willing to consider joining the service on a salaried basis, but they have no resources. I know the government of Ontario has a pot of money for alternate payment mechanisms and I want to say that one part of the solution to this urgent problem has to be expanding the community health centre concept.

A second solution for rural Ontario has to be a look at medical school tuitions. We know, according to what the society of rural family physicians has told us, that one of

the strategies that works best for bringing rural physicians home to rural communities, or bringing physicians into rural communities, is recruiting them from those selfsame areas.

The average household income in Renfrew county is something in the \$43,000 range. Do you know that since medical school tuition fees were deregulated a few years ago, at the University of Western Ontario medical school the average household income now of a first-year entrant to the medical school has risen, in just two years, from \$80,000 to \$140,000. Let me repeat that. The average household income now of the first-year entrant to the University of Western Ontario medical school is \$140,000. That household income of \$140,000 is three or four times the average household income in Renfrew county and most rural communities.

Do you think that kind of medical school tuition fee policy is helping this critical problem? Clearly, it is not, and I beg the government to revisit this medical school tuition policy, and particularly to understand what it's doing in terms of aggravating a problem that is already serious.

Another part of the strategy clearly has to be, colleagues, that medical schools—and in our area, the two that are regional schools are the University of Ottawa medical school and Queen's University medical school—have to do a better job and do it much quicker, in making sure that young people who are being trained to become physicians have as part of their medical education a good and ongoing exposure to the opportunities of practising medicine in rural communities.

Some of the medical schools have made some tentative steps to deal with this, but I do not personally believe those steps have been aggressive or numerous enough. I have talked to deans over the years and I've heard all the excuses. I'm simply saying what rural members of this Legislature know, that whether it's Beachburg, Cobden, Eganville, Killaloe, Wilno, Griffith, Matawachan, Chalk River—in fact the Pembroke city council, the Petawawa town council, have in recent days passed resolutions imploring the government, asking the Legislature, to take steps to deal with problems, including the city of Pembroke, where we now have a deficit of family practitioners.

#### 1110

Medical schools can and should do more. I think we have an obligation to the hundreds of thousands of people, many of them elderly, living in rural Ontario, where there is no public transit to speak of, where oftentimes seniors are on fixed incomes and don't have great private resources to travel distances to get what? To get access to primary health care.

I'd simply say this is a matter that deserves more immediate action than we have seen from the current government. I repeat on behalf of people like those of Cobden-Beachburg, the Whitewater-Bromley Community Health Centre group, that's done everything we've asked them to do—they've gone out and prepared the community; they've raised awareness; they've raised

money—they have asked me to ask the government and the minister: when are you going to expand funding for the community health centre concept?

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I'm pleased to take part in this discussion because I have the largest rural constituency in all of Ontario. In fact, it covers 35% of the geography of Ontario, and there's hardly a community in my constituency that isn't facing a shortage of physicians. But it's not just a shortage of physicians. It's a shortage of nurses; it's a shortage of other health care professionals. Indeed, almost every week the situation gets worse.

I want to speak about it from the perspective of family physicians but also from the perspective of all those other people in the health care system who support family physicians. When they're not there, it becomes more difficult to recruit and retain family physicians.

This is not some new thing. This is not something that sort of happened yesterday. In fact, this has been studied over the last 20 years a number of times. You can basically recite the issues that have to be dealt with. One of the problems is that if all of your medical schools are located in southern Ontario, and particularly in an urban setting in southern Ontario, when students, no matter where they come from, attend medical school, what gets drilled into their heads is that it's urban medicine, high-tech medicine, medicine that is supported by 10 specialists down the hall that's the only kind of medical practice you can have. In fact, that's the only kind of medical practice a number of medical students get.

Some years ago, in 1990, in fact, steps were taken to overcome that, in particular in northern Ontario, by instituting two things: the northwestern Ontario medical training program, called NOMP, and the northeastern Ontario medical training program, called NOMEc. In fact, those two things were actually quite successful.

If you looked at the medical school students who took part in those two medical training programs, which actually took medical students into the small communities in northern Ontario and let them experience what family practice would be like in a small town, those two programs were very successful in that many of the students who came through the program actually went back to those communities to start their practice. They didn't regard it any longer as somehow going to another planet. Many of them who went back and started up a practice or took over a practice in a small community like that, if you looked five years later, had stayed. They actually continued to work in that kind of setting.

So some inroads were made in overcoming this problem. But there are a number of things that have happened in the intervening years, particularly in the last seven years, that have made it more difficult. If you don't expand the number of training spaces—and I for one am glad that the government after seven years finally saw that. They finally saw that they needed to expand the number of training spaces. The announcement of a medical school in Sudbury is a good half-step, but it's only a half-step because we really want to deal with the

problem. We also have to establish something in Thunder Bay. You need to pay particular attention to what's happening in First Nation communities, because if First Nation communities cannot access family doctors and health care in their own community, then they will move to communities like Thunder Bay or Timmins or Sault Ste Marie or Sudbury or Kenora or Dryden or Sioux Lookout and you'll experience a physician shortage in the local community. So government has taken a half-step, sort of a half-recognition of the problem, but the half-step isn't good enough.

The other part of this that is problematic is that if you only think of health care and a medical practice in a small community or a rural community as simply family doctors, you miss a very important part of the equation. The important part of the equation is nurse practitioners.

If every time someone cuts their lip playing hockey or if every time someone has to get a few stitches as a result of a soccer injury they have to see a physician to get it stitched up, it won't take very long before your family physician is working 12- and 13-hour days, seven days a week. Under those circumstances you will not keep family physicians. They will leave because they can't sustain those hours of work over long periods of time.

So if we're going to deal with this issue we have to recognize that nurse practitioners are a central part of the solution. There are all kinds of health care issues that under the current regime have to be dealt with by a family physician but under a more thoughtful strategy could and should be dealt with by a nurse practitioner.

I'll give you an example of one that I had to deal with. About 10 years ago I was playing hockey on a Sunday night with some friends of mine in my hometown and one of the fellows got a stick up and got under my shield and cut me above the lip. It just so happened one of the fellows on the ice was a physician, a friend of mine, and he said, "Come on, I'll take you down to emergency and we'll stitch up your lip."

We get down to emergency and the emergency room nurse would be about as far away as the Hansard reporter is here, and he points to the emergency room nurse and says, "You see that nurse? She does better stitches than I do." In fact, every morning now when I wake up and I look in the mirror I understand what he meant by that remark, but at the time I didn't quite get the drift of it. But he said, "This emergency room nurse does better stitches than I do, but under the current rules I will stitch your lip because I get to make a claim against OHIP for an emergency service, and then when you come in seven days from now to have the stitches taken out I'll get to make another claim for OHIP. So it will cost me," referring to himself, the physician, "about \$100 to put five stitches in above your lip and then take them out again."

He points to the emergency room nurse, who at that time would have been paid about \$22 an hour, and he said, "It would take her about three minutes to stitch up your lip; it would take her 30 seconds to take the stitches out; it would cost the health care system less than \$10 for

her to put the stitches in." He said, "This is why we need nurse practitioners."

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** And who brought them in?

**Mr Hampton:** One of the government members wants to take some credit somehow for nurse practitioners. He ought to know that nurse practitioners were started by the government before you, and you ought to know that under your government there are 200 nurse practitioners in the province today who aren't working. They're trained, but they're not working because the government hasn't brought in a payment strategy for those nurse practitioners. If you want to get the statistics, talk to the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario. They will give you not only the numbers, but they'll also tell you the situational issues of those nurse practitioners.

So I just want to point out that a thoughtful government would've said that we need to have a strategy whereby nurse practitioners can work throughout the health care system but particularly in remote rural and northern Ontario communities, and that if you have a strategy whereby they can be paid and they can be paid an adequate amount and they have some job security, you wouldn't have 200 nurse practitioners in Ontario today who are unemployed.

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If those nurse practitioners were employed, I suggest to you that the pressures on family physicians in small rural communities would be much, much less. They wouldn't have to stitch up every hockey player who comes in and has a cut above the lip. They wouldn't have to stitch up everybody who got a fish hook in their finger when they were trying to take the hook off their line. They wouldn't have to deal with everyone who comes in and has a common cold but simply needs to be examined to confirm that they have a common cold and then be told: "I'm sorry, there is no cure for the common cold. Go home, drink lots of liquids, stay warm and generally look after yourself."

A number of those things would no longer fall on the responsibility of family physicians. They could be handled by nurse practitioners, which would mean we wouldn't be working family physicians in rural and northern Ontario to death and we'd have a far better capacity to retain them in our communities.

I too want to speak a bit about community health centres because the issue of community health centres is important. I'll just give you an example of one of the communities in my constituency. It's a community of about 9,000 people. In fact, they have three doctors' clinics. I believe there are three physicians in one, four in another and four in another. They're really running three independent businesses.

Because they're running three independent businesses, there is not very much capacity for a physician in practice number one to cover for a physician in practice number two to cover for a physician in practice number three. In other words, they may all be making money, but in terms of health care for the whole community it's

rather uncoordinated. In fact, there are lots of gaps and cracks.

If you had a community health centre in the community, if every physician who came to the community didn't have to cover all this overhead of setting up a practice and employing their own nurses and their own receptionists and all of the support equipment, if they didn't have to worry about all of that, if there was a community health centre where they could work on a wage basis and they knew there were going to be nurse practitioners to support and, gee, maybe even something revolutionary, a chiropractor on staff to do some of the supportive work, in that community of 8,000, I would suggest to you that physicians would be able to cover for one another more often; nurse practitioners would be able to take responsibility for some of the work that now falls on family physicians; physicians might even get a weekend off once in a while; they might even be able to go home at night four nights a week, knowing that they're not going to be called in because someone is covering that week. They might be able to go away, say, to Toronto or to Winnipeg for further professional education, knowing that someone is going to cover for them for two weeks.

It's an idea where health care starts to make sense on a community level. But, alas, do you know what's happened in this province? The government has frozen the budgets and frozen the number of community health centres in the province for the last seven years. There's been no expansion in the community health centres across this province. There's a waiting list that doesn't run in twos or threes; there's a waiting list of several dozen communities who have put in a request for a community health centre and have been told by this government, "We're not expanding the community health centre network. We're not interested in making health care work on a community basis. We're not interested in a scenario where physicians would be working together, covering for one another. We're not interested in a strategy where nurse practitioners would be part of the program and would be helping to lighten the load on family physicians. We're not interested in any of that." They're saying to the communities, "You're on your own."

There are a number of things that could be done to make it easier to recruit physicians, make it easier for communities to retain their family physicians, make better use of nurse practitioners, and have a more inclusive, holistic health care system. Think of it, Speaker. Think of the money and the overhead a community would save if it didn't have to deal with the infrastructure of three independent physician clinics and instead there was one community health centre.

You wouldn't need three separate radiation devices. You wouldn't need three separate small labs. You wouldn't need three separate receptionist intakes. You wouldn't need a lot of this duplication of infrastructure, and it would actually start to make sense on a community level because physicians could cover for one another. Physicians could actually look forward to a quality of

life. They might be able to take a two-week vacation in the summer. They might have a weekend off without being called in to work, because another physician would be covering for them.

These are practical, workable things that could be done, that should be done in Ontario. But alas, what's been the government's response? "Don't go there"; not interested in expanding community health centres; continues to say no to the dozens upon dozens upon dozens of communities that have come forward and said, "We need a community health centre. We want to incorporate nurse practitioners within the practice. We want to broaden the community health centre, avoid the duplication, so our physicians will not have such a load, our physicians will be able to take time off for further professional education, will be able to spend time with their families etc." The government's response has been no.

I'm glad this issue was brought forward today. I'd be pleased to offer government members more illustrations, but alas, I don't think in general the government has been listening. That's why it's a private member's resolution.

**Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe):** I certainly would share my time with the member for Northumberland. I know he was on his feet and looking forward to speaking to this resolution so I will only take a couple of minutes.

This resolution, like many others, is a direct budgetary issue. And when we hear about the budget and how money should be spent, we hear from Howard Hampton, the leader of the NDP, who supports alternative budgets like the ones which come out from the Centre for Social Justice. The CAW puts out its own alternative budget. You support that type of budget and certainly—

**Mr Hampton:** It's all part of democracy.

**Mr Mazzilli:** And it is. It is and I respect your leadership for being behind those alternative budgets.

But what is still a secret today is, what would a Dalton McGuinty Liberal budget look like? We hear every day, in this Legislature and outside of the Legislature, "You've not spent enough on this. You've not spent enough on that." What is the proper amount? I'm waiting to hear that. The people of Ontario are waiting to hear that. But you know what? The Ontario Liberals, under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty, will not make those very basic decisions. I suspect the people of Ontario will want to hear some of those decisions.

Do you know what they're opposing now? A \$300-million tax credit for hard-working parents. It's OK for the rich to capital-cost their Mercedes with their businesses—that's OK—but for a hard-working family who has children and chooses to send them to a religious school to take a 10% tax credit, that's not OK with Dalton McGuinty. Those people should pay everything in taxes. They should pay their school taxes, they should pay their education and not get anything back for it.

Our government, under the leadership of Mike Harris, will continue to fight for hard-working families. I turn it over the member for Northumberland.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West):** I'd like to advance an important part of a solution that would actually help go a long way to further the cost of bringing doctors into Ontario.

When the Minister of Health attended the Windsor area to open the long-awaited Windsor Cancer Clinic, we brought into the Caboto Club for some meetings in advance of that. We sat him down to meet our medical school community, those who've been advancing for some time the notion of opening a medical school as a satellite of the University of Western Ontario in London. The minister's still hedging on when that's going to forward. We hope to hear something soon.

Following that meeting, we moved into the library in the basement of the Caboto Club. Just then the power went out. We continued in that hour to meet, I thought rather poetically, with the Minister of Health in dark. Thankfully, Dr Heimann was there with a huge flashlight. Why he would carry this around I don't know, but he turned the flashlight upside down, set it in the centre of the coffee table and we proceeded to have the balance of the hour meeting in the dark lit only by the flashlight.

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But what was impressive is that despite sitting in the dark with the Minister of Health, Dr Mark Gallow came to meet Tony Clement. A resident of Windsor, a member of the south Windsor community, a family doctor, someone who grew up in Windsor, was trained outside of Ontario as a medical doctor and continues to practise today as a family doctor in Michigan, he said to the Minister of Health, "I want to work in Ontario. I want to work as a family doctor in Windsor." Here are just some of the many letters that Dr Gallow has on file. Letters to the college of physicians, letters to the Minister of Health, letters to our local recruitment team: "How can I practise in Windsor?" Everyone is shutting the door on Dr Mark Gallow, a very knowledgeable individual who has practised for a number of years and who goes home every night to south Windsor and talks to his neighbours and friends about how they can't find a family doctor while he is more than happy to come back to work in Ontario.

These are the issues we brought forward to the Minister of Health. We said to the minister, "It's like giving them the sleeves out of your vest to make changes in the regulations. By the ministry's own account, we have some 450 people who have trained outside of Ontario at schools that can be recognized immediately to have standards equal to or better than ours in Ontario, who could be here tomorrow practising in Ontario—a vital part of a solution."

I marvel to hear the leader of the third party today stand and talk about underserviced communities. In 1993, the NDP government cut the number of spots at our medical schools, under some cost containment measure which was at best short-sighted because it only compounded the problem that demographics cause us today, along with a whole list of other issues.

In that hour with the Minister of Health we brought to him cardiologists, Dr Chette and Dr Glanz, and sat with the Minister of Health and said, "We need to perform angioplasty in Windsor. We can't put these patients in Windsor, where we have a much higher level of heart disease and requirement for angioplasty, sitting in expensive cardiac care beds in Windsor hospitals on waiting lists for London. We need to move them quickly, to do angioplasty service right in Windsor." Not only does it service our patients better and actually help people who have heart disease live—because we have a higher mortality rate for heart disease in our area than in any other part of Ontario, and that means people die because they don't get service quick enough—but it also allows us to go and search for cardiologists and bring them to Windsor. They won't come to Windsor if they don't have the tools to practise their craft. What they need is access to the cath lab. They need access to the diagnostic equipment for heart patients. They need to be able to do procedures that they just stepped out of school learning to do. We need cardiologists in Windsor. We need to provide the field for them to practise as cardiologists.

Two months before that we met with the Ministry of Health. We gave them a nine-point plan of what they could do to provide services to lay the groundwork to bring physicians to our community, the most dire of southern urban centres in shortages of physicians. We itemized ways to increase funding for nurse practitioners so they could practise with family doctors. We asked that they expand community health centres in Windsor so that people could take advantage of that.

We asked them to do a review of these community clinics, the clinics that don't carry files on patients. We have patients, like cancer patients, who cannot fill pain prescriptions for cancer treatment because they don't have a family doctor. When they go to the local clinic, the local clinic will not give them medication on a prescription because they don't keep files on patients. We need to find a way to encourage all of those clinics to act in a much broader fashion to assist our patients who have no family doctor.

We brought in both CEOs of our hospitals to meet with the Minister of Health, Frank Bagatto and Dr Marty Girash, to talk about hospital operating budgets. What does this have to do with families and specialist physicians? Everything, because we don't have enough operating room time to allow our specialists to work in our area. We found an orthopaedic surgeon who came to Windsor and wanted to practise and could not fit into our operating rooms to actually do hip surgery and knee surgery because we can't operate our operating rooms with enough time because of the funding that our hospitals have.

When we've finished this restructuring and all the renos around our remaining two hospitals, from four, we still will not have enough operating room time for the current number of surgeons that we have in our Windsor area, let alone trying to attract the 50-some-odd special-

ists who have already been identified by a number of sources as being short in our community.

We asked this minister specifically to address, in southern urban communities, these kinds of solutions that he could implement tomorrow and not to wait the four to seven years before we see new people come out as doctors, out of schools and new medical schools. Increasing spaces is critical. We have solutions that can be implemented immediately: number one, starting with the streamlining of foreign-trained physicians. I marvel to have heard it in the budget. I marvel to have heard about it in a throne speech. I marvel to hear too that the College of Physicians hasn't had a phone call yet to tell them to advance their plan in any kind of meaningful way to get these people practising in Ontario.

I'm anxious to see the response from this House to my colleague Sean Conway's resolution that deals with the shortages in rural Ontario. Let me say that it's a sad day when a member from Windsor West fills out an application form that says "northern rural underserviced designation program" for the city of Windsor, and yet that's what we did in 1997. After receiving that designation in 1997, we are shorter of doctors today than we were then. I look forward to the current government fulfilling our needs, which they can do in very short order with the kinds of solutions we have advanced for some time.

**Mr Galt:** I'm pleased to rise to speak on Mr Conway's resolution. I have a lot of empathy for his concerns. I really see it as equal access for all Ontarians to proper medical services. This is important to me in many respects, not only the medical aspect but also for small-town and rural Ontario as it relates to economic development. Serving on the Premier's Task Force on Rural Economic Renewal, one of the barriers we have in Ontario to economic renewal and development in rural Ontario is the lack of physicians and sometimes the lack of medical services in small-town Ontario.

I'd like for a moment to refer to some of the things that have been happening in my riding. Some of the communities have taken it into their own hands to ensure proper medical services are there. I would like to compliment the Campbellford hospital board for building a medical clinic. That was opened a year or so ago, and since then several physicians have come into their community. Quinte West raised funds and worked for a long time to get a new hospital in that community, the Trenton Memorial Hospital. They were promised a new hospital first by the Liberal government; they were then promised a new hospital by the NDP government; it didn't happen until our government came in and went through the HSRC and we ended up with a new hospital in Quinte West.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Galt:** The member from Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington I'm sure is very pleased to know there's a hospital being developed in her riding, up in Bancroft, as part of the Quinte Healthcare Corp. That wouldn't have happened had it not been for our government working with the Health Services Restructuring

Commission. I would think she'd want to compliment our government for obtaining that facility for her.

Also, compliments are very much in order for communities in west Northumberland, like Cobourg, Port Hope, Bewdley, Grafton, Colborne and Castleton, not to mention the townships of Hope and Hamilton, that worked so hard to raise funds for a new hospital, one I was pleased to announce just the day before the last election back in 1999. They've raised over \$11 million for that new facility. We broke the ground last spring and construction will be rolling very shortly.

A lot of things have happened in Ontario to help improve medicine. This problem is universal. It's across Canada and the US. It isn't just here in Ontario. We've brought in things like tuition payment for physicians who will go to rural Ontario and stay there for at least four years. We've increased spending this year by some \$1.2 billion, which amounts to more than several other ministries put together. In the next few years we will be expanding for physicians—120 positions, not to mention the 25 in the north and the 40 that already came in.

One of the problems we've had is that you will remember Minister of Health Ruth Grier coming in and capping what physicians could make and also cutting positions in medical schools. We're now finding the results of those cuts.

There's a tremendous number of things our government has been doing, making major steps to improve health services in rural and northern Ontario. The changes that were made pre-1995 are hurting today, hurting drastically. Are more changes needed? Yes, and I for one will be supporting Mr Conway's resolution.

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**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** I appreciate having the opportunity to speak on the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke's private member's resolution today. As mentioned by the member for Windsor West, it is a very important resolution.

C'est le temps propice de passer le message au gouvernement Harris et de lui faire comprendre qu'il y a une pénurie de médecins en Ontario et surtout dans les régions rurales.

Depuis l'élection de ce gouvernement en 1995 et aussi en 1999, nous nous apercevons que de plus en plus de nos médecins quittent l'Ontario pour pratiquer la médecine aux États-Unis et même en Europe. Aujourd'hui, ce gouvernement est conscient qu'il y a un manque de médecins dans 109 de nos communautés, et surtout dans le secteur rural, que ce soit dans les régions de Hearst, Kapuskasing, Pembroke, Wawa et même Maxville, d'où vient une de nos pages d'aujourd'hui, Rhianon.

Dans la circonscription de Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, aucun transport en commun n'existe. Je peux vous dire, monsieur le Président, que dans la région de Bourget, tout récemment les bureaux de médecins ont dû fermer leurs portes, en raison du manque de médecins. À Rockland même, la clinique du Dr Cournoyer a fermé ses portes il y a quelques années, et le Dr Cournoyer et

quelques-uns de ses collègues sont maintenant dans la région de la Louisiane aux États-Unis.

À Alexandria, nous avons de grandes difficultés à garder nos médecins. Nos résidents et résidentes doivent se rendre soit à Cornwall, soit à Hawkesbury, et même à Ottawa. Encore une fois, aucun transport en commun n'existe. Mais il me semble que ce gouvernement, même si récemment ils ont présenté un rapport sur le développement du secteur rural, a complètement manqué d'identifier que nous connaissons une pénurie de médecins dans nos régions rurales.

À Cornwall récemment, le Centre de santé communautaire de l'Estrie m'a fait parvenir une lettre m'informant de leur situation alarmante. Le directeur de ce centre, M. Beaulieu, m'a informé que les médecins quittent la région de Cornwall pour se rendre à l'autre côté du fleuve Saint-Laurent, qui est les États-Unis. L'hôpital Montfort a de la difficulté à recruter de nouveaux médecins et même à garder ceux que nous avons en place. C'est dû à l'incertitude de ce gouvernement, qui parle toujours de fermer cet hôpital. Nous connaissons tous que l'étude qui a été entreprise en 1996 était complètement fausse. Il faut dire que, dû à la pression de membres de ce gouvernement, nous avons inclus l'hôpital Montfort à l'intérieur de cette étude, et nous avions identifié que seulement 18 % de francophones provenaient de cette région : encore là une lacune—je ne dirai pas un mensonge—dû au fait que les gens n'ont pas eu la chance de faire une étude approfondie. Mais il y a bel et bien 68 % de francophones dans cette région. Mais c'est dans ces études-là que nous pouvons voir que le gouvernement ne comprend pas la situation du secteur rural.

Tout récemment, le 13 février 2001, l'équipe McGuinty avait reconnu qu'il y avait bel et bien un manque de médecins dans 109 de nos communautés. On a même suggéré de regarder la possibilité de créer un campus en médecine dans la région du nord, mais le gouvernement s'est réveillé, et le 17 mai dernier, nous avons lancé une annonce disant que nous allions créer un centre de médecine dans la région du nord, soit dans la région de Sudbury et de Thunder Bay. Est-ce qu'il faut toujours renouveler la mémoire à ce gouvernement pour leur dire que de temps à autre il faut concentrer nos études à l'extérieur des grands centres et non seulement dans la région de Toronto ?

Nous connaissons très bien les objectifs de ce gouvernement : c'est de privatiser, privatiser, privatiser de plus en plus nos services publics. Mais lorsqu'il vient le temps de privatiser les services de santé, comme nous essayons de le faire dans le domaine de l'éducation, nous oublions toujours de garantir aux francophones et aussi aux citoyens et citoyennes de l'Ontario qu'un service sera toujours en place. Je regarde les situations des cliniques de radiologie. J'ai mentionné dans cette Chambre il n'y a pas tellement longtemps qu'une compagnie de l'Alberta qui avait fait l'achat de 140 cliniques de radiologie en Ontario était en grande difficulté. La bourse démontrait récemment que l'apport

ne vaut que 12 sous chacune. Cette compagnie de l'Alberta qui a fait l'achat de la majorité de nos cliniques—le gouvernement ne pourra regarder à s'assurer qu'il pourra y avoir une continuité dans le secteur rural. Tout récemment, nous avons annoncé que dans ma région seulement, la région de Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, nous allions procéder à la fermeture d'au moins quatre de ces cliniques. À travers l'Ontario, plusieurs de ces cliniques font face à l'incertitude.

Toujours dans cette Chambre ici à l'Assemblée législative, nous osons porter le blâme sur le gouvernement fédéral. J'ai mentionné hier soir que le gouvernement provincial devrait faire attention, le gouvernement Harris, puisque cette année le gouvernement fédéral va remettre à la province de l'Ontario au-delà de 5,7 \$ milliards pour le domaine de la santé, et tout récemment nous avons annoncé que le gouvernement fédéral donnerait à la province de l'Ontario plus de 400 \$ millions pour l'achat d'équipement dans nos hôpitaux. Les 5,7 \$ milliards de transfert du fédéral au provincial représentent plus de 2 \$ milliards de plus de ce que vous avez obtenu en 1998-99 : 2 milliards de dollars de plus. Est-ce que c'est la raison pour laquelle aujourd'hui vous vous êtes tus sur ce point que le gouvernement fédéral n'arrive pas en aide ?

Je crois que le gouvernement doit se pencher davantage et regarder toutes les possibilités. Je regarde aussi dans le domaine des ambulances. Le gouvernement a omis encore de regarder au secteur rural.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton):** I'm very pleased to speak on this resolution from the member from Pembroke. I would say that obviously we're focusing on physician supply and distribution in Ontario.

I want to speak for a moment on one of the Rae government initiatives in terms of the northern medical school. I want to thank Dr George and other members of the Expert Panel on Health Professional Human Resources for their dedication in authoring their report, Shaping Ontario's Physician Workforce. I appreciate the challenges faced by the panel in considering the very complex issues of physician human resources. The expert panel is to be commended for producing a thoughtful report that maps out a comprehensive strategy to ensure we have the right number and mix of physician resources to meet future health needs.

Like the expert panel, this government is committed to ensuring that physician services are available to residents across Ontario. On May 17, in response to recommendations of the expert panel, we gave clear evidence of our commitment. In a landmark announcement, our government unveiled our plan to create a northern medical school, the first new medical school in Ontario in more than 30 years. A made-in-northern-Ontario medical school exemplifies our government's commitment to deliver high-quality health care to all residents of Ontario, regardless of where they live.

We expect that the new medical school will begin admitting students in the year 2004. From an initial group

of 55 undergraduates, 20 will move to Thunder Bay beginning in the year 2006 to complete two years of clinical training, while the remaining 35 will stay in Sudbury for clinical training. Both Sudbury and Thunder Bay will offer permanent post-graduate specialty positions, with Laurentian University providing most of the research capabilities. Medical students of this new school will develop their skills and experience while having the opportunity to work in northern communities. This will help the north keep their best and brightest at home.

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This was a key point raised by the expert panel. They examined research that clearly demonstrated that where doctors train influences where doctors practise. Not only will medical students gain skills and experience in these locations, but they will also form professional and personal relationships during the six to 10 years of training in the north.

As well, e-learning or computer-mediated communication programs will be developed to offer distance learning to students through the Internet while providing an interactive educational experience.

This plan has already generated lots of excitement in the north. The city of Sudbury has hosted a northern and rural medical school symposium. Experts from around the world and the country, as well as members of northern communities, presented issues related to establishing and operating northern and rural medical schools.

Jean Watters, president of Laurentian University, said this was "a historic occasion for health care in northern Ontario," and that her university "is honoured to be in partnership with Lakehead University in this important initiative to improve the supply and distribution of doctors in the north."

I couldn't agree more. Our medical schools will both train doctors in the north and encourage them to practise there. I want to express my congratulations to Minister Clement and to the communities of Sudbury and Thunder Bay for creating this remarkable opportunity.

In closing, I want to focus that in my own riding I've been a part of and working with a doctors' task force in the city of Barrie through Royal Victoria Hospital and other interested parties. We have certainly been working very hard to deal with the situation within my riding. Mine is a very, very growth-oriented riding with a lot of demands on health services, for sure.

I want to say that this government has taken many efforts to make sure there is a supply of physicians throughout the province in terms of a number of measures in rural areas and non-urban centres, and also has taken innovative approaches in terms of medical service. But I'd like to hear from the other parties opposite, because this basically is a physician supply and distribution issue. What I'd like to hear from them is whether they'd be in favour of a fair geographic distribution of family physicians across the province in terms of whether the other parties would mandate and require the physicians to locate, to be able to get the licence and their OHIP number, to make sure we have a fair

distribution. I'd like to hear from the other parties what they think about that, because I think they're dodging the issue.

**Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** As a rural MPP, I also am fully aware of the problems with respect to recruitment and retention of physicians. There are a number of additional government initiatives I would like to describe this morning.

As we know, in July 1999 the Ministry of Health appointed Dr Robert McKendry as a fact-finding commissioner. This was a joint initiative with the Ontario Medical Association. When the report was released, we immediately committed \$11 million to implement the short-term recommendations and, secondly, to establish the expert panel which is chaired by Dr Peter George. I know mention was made of that by the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton, who gave a very good description of what's going on in northern Ontario with respect to the northern medical school. This panel provided advice on strategies to ensure a number of things: an adequate supply of doctors and more effective distribution, and changes to the medical education system to ensure an appropriate mix of doctors in this province. From this panel, we will expand undergraduate and post-graduate enrolment. We will increase post-graduate training positions. This is the first of a series of government initiatives in response to the expert panel report.

In response to Dr Robert McKendry's original report, we have implemented a number of initiatives to help small rural and northern communities recruit and retain physicians. This is supported by an annual commitment of \$11 million. We are funding additional post-graduate training in Ontario to recruit back Canadian medical school graduates. We've expanded the international medical graduate program by 50%. We've doubled the number of community development officers. We've expanded two northern family medicine residency training programs. We've expanded the ministry's re-entry training return-of-service program by 15, from 25 to now 40 physicians, and we have created the tuition grant program and location incentive funds.

In July of last year the ministry announced \$4 million for free tuition, again to ensure that new doctors are willing to return to underserviced areas. In July 2000 we announced new maternity benefits; female physicians are eligible to receive 50% of their average weekly earnings for the past year.

Our government has implemented a number of other initiatives, really too many to cover in the time allotted. I'll give a few examples that many of us are aware of: the \$70-an-hour sessional fee for those willing to work nights, weekends and holidays in our emergency department; the community-sponsored contract program, again directed toward northern communities; there is an Internet physician job registry, again in agreement with the Ontario Medical Association, to help identify and to help communities to recruit physicians; I want to remind those present of the locum program to assist northern and rural communities that are experiencing shortages of physician

services; and of course the underserviced area designation, where communities that are experiencing a severe shortage get that kind of assistance. I know in my area, both Norfolk county and much of Haldimand have been identified. Again, unfortunately, when physicians are present we still have trouble having physicians report to hospitals.

**Mr Conway:** I want to thank colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their helpful and constructive observations with respect to this issue. I want to repeat, my concern as the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke is this critical situation of doctor shortages, family practitioner shortages, in rural small-town Ontario.

Let me repeat that today in Ontario nearly 20% of our population lives in rural small-town Ontario and less than 10% of family practitioners work in small-town rural Ontario. So that problem is becoming more and more serious.

Yes, there have been initiatives undertaken by the current government, by the Rae government, by the Peterson government and by the Davis government. I might remind people that the nurse practitioner initiative began decades ago, I believe under the Davis administration. But as the Pembroke Observer editorialized last week in an editorial on May 22, 2001, "Doctors a Scarce Commodity Here in the Upper Ottawa Valley." In a very balanced and thoughtful way, the editorial in the Pembroke Observer makes the point that more and more of these communities—in my area it's Cobden, it's Beachburg, it's Westmeath, it's La Passe, Douglas, areas like that, Killaloe, Griffith, all kinds of small communities—there either is an older family practitioner retiring or simply no one there to meet the family needs of hundreds and thousands of people.

The member from Kenora is right that it's not just about doctors; we have to provide good primary care and I strongly support an expansion of the community health centres. Let me say again, for those good people in the Cobden-Beachburg area, the Whitewater-Bromley Community Health Centre group is a very powerful, positive group that has worked to find a solution, and for them it is an expansion of the community health centre concept. We have the need; we have the people. We need a positive government response in these areas.

**The Deputy Speaker:** This completes the time allocated for debate on this motion.

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT WORKERS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** We will now deal with private members' notice of motion number 4, moved by Mr Miller. Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. The motion is carried.

#### DOCTORS' SERVICES

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** We will now deal with private members' notice of motion number 5, standing in the name of Mr Conway.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock.

*The House recessed from 1200 to 1330.*

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### FALUN GONG

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):**

This past Saturday, I had the pleasure of joining over 50 practitioners of Falun Gong at Allan Gardens in my riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale. Falun Gong, also known as Falun Dafa, is a peaceful, healthy and popular meditation exercise of body, mind and spirit which has benefited thousands of Canadians and millions worldwide.

The fundamental values of Falun Gong—truth, compassion and forbearance—are really core values shared by most every citizen of our province. Tragically, the world has witnessed the often horrific persecution and intimidation of practitioners of Falun Gong in China simply for the espousal of their core values. It is, therefore, most disturbing that I report to this House that this past winter a rally was organized in Toronto to condemn Canadian Falun Gong practitioners, featuring the Chinese Consul General as the primary speaker.

Lawyer Rocco Galati reports there have been threatening phone calls from the Chinese Consulate officers to intimidate Canadian Falun Gong practitioners since July 1999. I understand this information has been brought to the attention of the Attorney General.

I am calling on all members of provincial Parliament, and in particular the Premier and the Minister of Citizenship, to speak out and protect Ontarians exercising their fundamental right of freedom of belief and freedom of assembly and association.

Today, I'm joined in the members' gallery by two of the Falun Gong representatives from my riding. I encourage all members to give them a warm welcome.

#### EDUCATION

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** During Reading Week, I had the opportunity to meet with two classes in the Notre Dame Elementary School in Cobourg; during constituency week, I spent an hour and a half in the technical department of East Northumberland Secondary School; and this Friday I'll be spending more than an hour with a grade 10 class at the Campbellford Secondary School.

A year ago, we were very fortunate to have the Minister of Education spend approximately two hours in an elementary school in my riding of Northumberland. Since my election in 1995, either myself, my staff or my wife have attended all secondary school graduations in my riding. I do this because I enjoy it, because it's educational for me and because I have been invited by the school. I can assure you that I did not do it because of the Liberal education critic's letter, nor do I have any intention of reporting to him any of my activities connected with education.

I congratulate the Liberals on finally getting out to visit schools, something the PC members of this House have been doing all along.

With all due respect, I would encourage the Liberal education critic to leave partisan politics out of education. I would suggest that he should be providing sound alternatives for our government's education policies. There is absolutely no room in our government for partisan politics in the classroom.

#### NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT LEGISLATION

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** For over a year now, headlines in provincial newspapers have been reading as follows: "Dirty Water, Rural Politics"; "E Coli Scare Renews Calls for Ontario to Regulate Manure"; "Hog Factory Abandons Quebec ... Take Advantage of Ontario's Less Stringent Manure Disposal Regulations"; "Experts Try to Calm Neighbours' Fear of Factory Hog Farms"; "Neighbours Fear 6,000-Pig Farm"; "Hogs Aren't the Only Problem"; "Farmers Get a Bad Rap."

Farmers are truly getting a bad rap in this province. I lay the direct responsibility for this on the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for allowing the media to portray agriculture as the sole reason for the contamination of water in this province.

Minister of Agriculture, you must speak up. This can't be further from the truth in saying that all this blame lies with agriculture. I've got a municipality in my own riding, the village of Straffordville. Do you know why their water system is polluted? Because of faulty septic tank systems. You can't blame that on the farmers of this province.

This government and this Ministry of Agriculture have totally mishandled this issue of dealing with nutrient management. Ontario farmers, residents and municipalities are demanding clear, fair legislation and regulations. We need to level the playing field in this province, not just the minimum that municipalities may exceed. It's incumbent on the minister to stand up and guarantee to every Ontario citizen that we will see province-wide legislation.

Minister, your action is causing serious division in rural Ontario. It's stifling investment in this province. When will we see this legislation?

#### CHARLESTOWN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

##### **Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey):**

It's my pleasure to stand today and publicly acknowledge the 30th anniversary of Charlestown Residential School located in my riding of Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey. Thirty years ago, co-founders Wayne and Janet Dunster had a vision for how they could improve the lives of Ontario's youth. Their commitment, determination and perseverance led to Charlestown Residential School.

Charlestown Residential School houses hard-to-serve adolescents with developmental and other handicaps. Most of the residents at Charlestown are young teenagers placed there by children's aid societies from across Ontario. Through many governments and many different approaches in philosophy on how troubled youth can best be served, Charlestown has always been there, doing their job and doing it well.

Wayne and Janet are hands-on operators who take their responsibilities to the children of Charlestown very seriously. Young people who have spent time at Charlestown over the years still come back and update Wayne on what they are doing and how important their time at Charlestown was to their development.

As the local provincial member of Parliament, I've had the pleasure of working with Wayne and Janet Dunster over the years, and Charlestown Residential School couldn't have had more committed or determined advocates. It's my pleasure to congratulate Wayne and Janet on their commitment to Charlestown and wish them many more years of service to Ontario's youth.

#### SEWAGE AND WATER TREATMENT

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** Many municipalities in my Thunder Bay-Superior North riding are growing increasingly frustrated with the government's foot-dragging related to funding for upgrades to water treatment systems in their communities.

As you know, in the aftermath of Walkerton, the province is requiring all municipalities to meet new standards related to water treatment. While every municipality in my riding is working to meet those standards, it is nothing less than stunning that the provincial funding program set up to help those communities get on with the job has not yet approved any of the capital projects that were applied for well over six months ago. In the case of Nipigon, minor turbidity problems, which have forced the community to recently issue a boil-water advisory, could have been avoided had the province approved the funding application which has been gathering dust in some ministry office since last November. These delays are unacceptable.

Having said that, the problems my municipalities face go even deeper than that. While I believe that the province should provide full funding for these upgrades, it appears that the government will only provide a percentage of the costs. In the case of Terrace Bay, which

the ministry has determined is eligible for only 20% of the total cost, they may be forced to pay for their major upgrades by imposing huge increases to the residential property tax rates unless the government steps in.

Minister, I have two requests of you. First, please stop the foot-dragging and approve the applications you have received so that situations like Nipigon can be avoided in the future. But further to that, you must re-evaluate the level of funding support you will provide. Nobody will argue that clean drinking water is absolutely vital for every community, but surely your aim cannot be to bankrupt a municipality to achieve that goal.

### WATER QUALITY

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** I don't agree with Ian Urquhart, who wrote in the Star that there was no smoking gun at the Walkerton inquiry. The environment ministry staff wrote at least eight memos warning that the Conservative government's drastic budget cuts could put health or environmental protection at risk, according to evidence submitted this week. Testimony by Linda Stevens, the deputy minister at the time of the cuts, indicated that former environment ministers Brenda Elliott and Norm Sterling were aware of those worries. Stevens admitted that senior Conservative politicians knew their budget policies raised environmental risks almost from the start of the cuts in 1995.

Stevens said ministers Elliott and Sterling had seen some of the documents and had been at meetings where the proposals contained within were reviewed.

The cuts slashed the ministry's budget by almost half, led to the elimination of hundreds of jobs and forced the ministry to privatize such important functions as the testing of municipal drinking water, but the official government line was that the cutbacks would not compromise the environment. "These reforms will remove barriers that do not protect the environment and get in the way of job-creating economic activity and growth," the ministry's 1996 business plan said.

How can we trust any minister in this government ever again when they assure us their cuts will not hurt our health and safety? Never again can we trust them.

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### DEER PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** I rise today to pay tribute to a group of students from Deer Park Public School in the town of Georgina in my riding of York North. The students recently won a special award for their video on anti-racism and multiculturalism that they produced, directed, videotaped and edited. Steven Simon, teacher of the grade 5 class, travelled with the class to the awards ceremony in Mississauga to collect their award from Panasonic Canada.

Panasonic, through its Kids Witness News program, provides video cameras, tech support, editing suite, free shirts for the kids and a free school bus for a field trip.

Mr Simon is very enthusiastic in his praise of Panasonic as a sponsor of this type of experience for the students. Most children would not come in contact with or have access to this type of equipment at least until high school. Deer Park is the only school in York region, of just 15 in Canada, that is part of the Kids Witness News program. This is Panasonic's 10th year of sponsorship. Congratulations to Deer Park Public School and the students, and to Mr Simon and his grade 5 class.

### AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** A new report on Toronto's ambulance service tells us that in almost one third of emergency calls, city ambulances took more than nine minutes to respond. These weren't routine calls; these were emergency calls in life-threatening situations where a delay of a few minutes can cost a life.

The report tells us that response times are much worse now than they were in 1997. Despite all the government claims to have done to fix the ambulance problem in the city of Toronto "once and for all," the so-called fixes have only made the situation worse.

Now the government wants to end critical care bypass, which was worse in March than it has ever been before. They're not going to allow hospitals to redirect their patients. But the problem of emergency room backlog will just get worse under this new plan.

The Toronto report says that response times are slower because ambulances are waiting in parking lots with their patients, and that's because there is no room for the patients in the hospitals. The problem has always been, and still is, the lack of beds in hospitals. Since 10,745 hours of paramedic service were lost to unloading delays at a cost of \$1.8 million, why doesn't the government bite the bullet and put those lost dollars into hospital beds so the real problem can be addressed?

This is not just a Toronto problem. In 1999, 28 of 49 regions across the province were taking more than 15 minutes, on average, to respond to emergency calls. The standard for response times in rural areas is 15 minutes. That's the outer limit of acceptable standards and more than half the regions in the province aren't even meeting that standard.

The government is negotiating standards and cost-sharing agreements with the municipalities. They'd better be sure we have enough ambulances to better those disastrous response times.

### PETERBOROUGH FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** The Peterborough Festival of Lights has recently been selected as the top cultural event in Ontario in the Attractions Canada Awards 2001. They were presented with a trophy at an awards ceremony in Halifax earlier this month.

The Peterborough summer festival of lights offers free open-air musical concerts followed by an illuminated

boat show and fireworks at Del Crary Park in downtown Peterborough every Wednesday and Saturday evening throughout the summer.

This season the festival entertainment lineup provides an attraction for the whole family with a variety of entertainers such as Lighthouse, Prairie Oyster, Jesse Cook, Canadian tribute to Glenn Miller, and Gordon Lightfoot, just to name a few. The festival is funded entirely by local sponsors and there is no admission charge to the public.

Minister, as the provincial representative for Peterborough, I would like to first congratulate Fred Anderson, chair of the festival, and his committee for their hard work and dedication and the recognition they so well deserve. Second, I would like to invite all members of this House to attend this festival this summer.

My colleague from Durham and I listen to it each Saturday night, both of us having cottages on the very famous Otonabee River, part of the Trent-Severn.

I invite everybody to come. It's a great evening. The Chair of Management Board has also been there and was entirely thrilled with what he saw. It's a great festival. Please come and join us.

#### HÔPITAL MONTFORT

#### MONTFORT HOSPITAL

**M<sup>me</sup> Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier) :** Je veux aujourd'hui féliciter publiquement l'administration de l'hôpital Montfort, qui est le seul hôpital de la région d'Ottawa à avoir reçu la prime de performance du gouvernement ontarien reconnaissant la qualité des services et l'efficacité de son administration, compte tenu de son sous-financement chronique de l'hôpital.

Yes, I want to take this opportunity today to publicly congratulate the administration of the Montfort Hospital in my riding of Ottawa-Vanier. Do you realize this is the only hospital in the Ottawa region that received a performance bonus offered by the Ministry of Health to 90 hospitals throughout the province for the quality of their services and the efficiency of their administration?

Ceci démontre pour une deuxième fois en moins de deux ans que l'administration de l'hôpital Montfort est une des meilleures en Ontario. Malgré tous ces déboires, l'hôpital Montfort continue d'être un excellent exemple de services médicaux exceptionnels et d'administration budgétaire efficace.

The staff and administration of Montfort Hospital continue to work very hard to allow this hospital to reach its full potential. I do hope the Harris government recognizes the importance of this institution to the community it serves so exceptionally.

Encore une fois, félicitations aux administrateurs de l'hôpital Montfort. Merci.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury) :** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I stand on a point of order to correct the record on a question I asked yesterday. I ask for your indulgence, as I have to refer to the first part of my question, refer briefly to the Solicitor General's answer, refer to a letter from the chief coroner and then correct the record.

In my first question to the Solicitor General, in part I said that "your government refused to honour an agreement reached between the chief coroner, who negotiated on your behalf, and the Ontario Association of Pathologists," and the Solicitor General said there was no agreement.

Mr Speaker, before I correct my comments, I refer to a May 18 letter that went out to all the pathologists in Ontario from James G. Young, the chief coroner for the province of Ontario. It said in one paragraph:

"The Ontario Pathologists Association met on several occasions with representatives from the Ministry of the Solicitor General and myself, and together we agreed on a proposal.... This proposal was presented vigorously to the government on your behalf. The authority to approve any increase rests with Management Board and ultimately, cabinet."

I'd like the record to reflect that in my question when I said that "your government refused to honour an agreement reached between the chief coroner," I should have also said, "between the chief coroner and representatives from the Solicitor General." Thank you, Speaker.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr) :** Just before we begin, we have with us today in the members' gallery east a former member, Mr Ron Johnson, the member for Brantford and a member of the 36th Parliament.

We also have with us today in the Speaker's gallery a trade delegation from the People's Republic of China. Please join us in welcoming our special guests.

1350

#### SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr) :** The member for Davenport (Mr Ruprecht) has provided me with written notice of a point of privilege, as required by standing order 21(c). I would like to thank the member for giving me sufficient time to carefully review this matter.

I wish to advise that I will be deciding on this matter without further hearing directly from the member at this time, as standing order 21(d) permits me to do.

The member indicated in his notice that the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities made an important announcement outside the House about a training course for nurses and pharmacists. He requested that I instruct the minister to make the appropriate statement inside the

House as soon as possible so that he can better represent his constituents.

In response, the House will know that there are many precedents to the effect that a Speaker cannot compel a minister to make a ministerial statement inside the House. In addition, the matter raised by the member relates to activities outside the chamber and is unconnected with the member's parliamentary duties.

For this reason, I find that a *prima facie* case of privilege has not been made out. But I want to thank the member for his concern.

### VISITORS

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We have in the members' gallery a very special guest, a great British Colombian, who brings good news of a Liberal government here in Canada, a pioneer in the area of sports and entertainment, whose one fault is that he is my brother, Alan Bryant.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Please join with me in welcoming the students, the staff and the volunteers of the Terry Fox public school in Cobourg. They're in the public gallery.

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** Mr Speaker, I hope that members might join me in welcoming the two Marilyns to the members gallery west: my stepmother, Marilyn Smitherman, who is celebrating her birthday today, and her great friend Marilyn Balan.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### TECHNOLOGY FOR CLASSROOMS TAX CREDIT STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN VUE DE CRÉER UN CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT FAVORISANT L'EMPLOI DE LA TECHNOLOGIE DANS LES SALLES DE CLASSE

Mr Hastings moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 64, An Act to amend the Corporations Tax Act, the Education Act and the Income Tax Act / Projet de loi 64, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'imposition des corporations, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi de l'impôt sur le revenu.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for a short statement.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** This bill would amend the Corporations Tax Act and the Income Tax Act to establish a tax credit for a taxpayer who donates eligible computer property—you're not listening—to a school board if the board accepts the donation. The tax credit would be in the amount of the taxpayer's

undepreciated capital cost of the computer property immediately before the donation. The eligible computer property must have been acquired new by the taxpayer no earlier than three years prior to the taxation year in which the donation is made.

Regulations would be made under the act to limit the type of computer property eligible for the tax credit and to provide rules for determining the amount that a partner may claim on a donation by the partnership.

The bill would also amend the Education Act to provide that a school board that accepts a donation of eligible computer property is required, to the extent reasonably possible, to use the property in the classroom for the purposes of instruction of pupils in the board's schools and specifically in any schools of the board that the donor may specify in connection with this donation.

#### IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE FOR ROAD USERS ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES SERVICES À LA CLIENTÈLE OFFERTS AUX USAGERS DE LA ROUTE

Mr Clark moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to permit the Minister of Transportation to delegate to persons in the private sector powers and duties and responsibilities to deliver services relating to road user programs / Projet de loi 65, Loi permettant au ministre des Transports de déléguer à des personnes du secteur privé des pouvoirs, des fonctions et des responsabilités pour fournir des services liés aux programmes à l'intention des usagers de la route.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

The member for a short statement?

**Hon Mr Clark:** I'll defer to ministers' statements.

#### WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

#### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT LA LOI INTITULÉE THE WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY ACT

Mrs Cunningham moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 66, An Act to amend The Wilfrid Laurier University Act, 1973 / Projet de loi 66, Loi modifiant la loi intitulée The Wilfrid Laurier University Act, 1973.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the minister have a short statement?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** The purpose of this bill is to update

The Wilfrid Laurier University Act, which has not been changed since 1973. The government is responding to a request from the university to update the university's governance structure and the language of the act.

The amendments, if passed by the Legislature, would update the Wilfrid Laurier University Act to add one more student representative to the board of governors, extend the terms of board officers, add the academic librarian and a member of staff to the academic senate, add a provision that would formalize past practice that the president of the university is the chair of senate, and provide a means to allow for de-designation of the president as chair of senate, modernize citizenship requirements for the board and use inclusive language in the act.

These changes were requested by Wilfrid Laurier University following consultations with the local community and stakeholders.

### VISITORS

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We have in the members' gallery this afternoon the father and the sister of one of our pages, Rhianon Cowley-Owen from Maxville. Page Rhianon told me that her sister will be celebrating her birthday on Saturday. Welcome to them in this Legislature.

### MOTIONS

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(d) the following changes be made to the ballot list for private members' public business: Mr Kells and Mr Barrett exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr Kells assumes ballot item number 37 and Mr Barrett assumes ballot item number 16.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** On a point of order, Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to introduce a motion that would separate out the parts of Bill 45 dealing with private education tax credits and also providing for a minimum of 370 hours of public hearing time throughout the province of Ontario this coming summer.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

1400

### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

#### PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** As all members of the House know, our government committed in 1995 to improve the way government works for its customers. We promised to ensure that customer service and satisfaction are at the top of the public service's priority list. In the Common Sense Revolution and the Blueprint we also promised taxpayers a smaller, more efficient government, and we promised to deliver government services through alternate means where it is safe, practical and cost-efficient. We believe the proper role of government is to manage public services rather than deliver them directly. We believe in the innovative abilities of Ontario's private sector and continue to encourage its potential for the delivery of services.

With these fundamental principles in mind, I am pleased to introduce for first reading today the Improving Customer Service for Road Users Act, 2001.

As its name suggests, the bill is designed to improve customer service for Ontario's drivers. Under this proposed legislation, the Minister of Transportation would have the authority to transfer the delivery of some road-user services and programs to other providers.

Also under this proposed legislation, the public interest will continue to be protected. While the bill would allow my ministry to phase out its direct service delivery role in selected areas, the government would continue to perform a number of vital functions. It would continue to establish quality standards and ensure that those quality standards are met. It would monitor new service providers to ensure they comply with existing and future legislation and, through a comprehensive performance management system, it would rigorously audit the performance of the new service providers. This process will ensure the public is receiving services that are safe, consistent and fair.

The bill I am introducing today also includes strong measures for the protection of privacy and the confidentiality of personal information. The legislation would require new service providers to abide by the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. As well, new service providers would be legally and contractually bound to keep private information about their clients in strict confidence. Their employees would be required to sign confidentiality agreements as one of the conditions of their hiring. I should mention that this is the same high standard to which my ministry employees have been held. As well, new service providers would be required to create the role of privacy officer within their organization. The privacy officer would be responsible for securing customer records.

Additionally, measures that are already in place to address fraud would continue. Any instance of fraud would, as is the case today, involve a police investigation. As I noted earlier, the government is committed to meeting the needs of the public and to providing high-quality customer service.

If this proposed legislation is passed, we will have the ability to transfer driver examination services to the private sector. By transferring the delivery of driver examination services, including written, vision and road testing, to another provider, we would draw on the creativity, flexibility and innovation of Ontario's private sector. This in turn will create new opportunities for businesses and consumers.

Our goal is to build on the recent improvements in customer service that have been made and to offer even better service to the public in the future. We believe alternative service delivery of the driver examination business would lead to increased efficiencies in how the services are offered. This initiative underscores our commitment to achieve the goal of ensuring that the people of Ontario wait no longer than six weeks to obtain a road test.

The big winner in this initiative is the public, with streamlined, enhanced efficiency and faster service with the same high standards of quality that my ministry has established through its service improvements.

I want to make it absolutely clear that, as my ministry considers transferring the delivery of some of its services, this government will not permit road safety to be compromised under any circumstances.

In the months ahead, our government will continue to examine the government's assets and the important services it delivers. We will continue to examine innovative options to improve how our services are delivered to the people of Ontario and we will continue to pursue alternate service delivery wherever it is safe, practical and cost-efficient to do so.

I'm eager to hear the members' comments on this proposed legislation and look forward to working with all members of the House to pass it into law.

## SENIOR CITIZENS

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors):** On behalf of all members of this House, and in fact on behalf of all Ontarians, I'd like to rise today to acknowledge Ontario's senior citizens.

This afternoon we are honoured to have eight very special seniors in our members' gallery. These eight people represent the 1.5 million older adults in our communities sharing their skills, their knowledge and their experience. Our guests today have made contributions too numerous to mention here, but I would like to ask them to rise and be acknowledged.

Mrs Barbara Black is co-chair of the Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations.

Mrs Shirley Dmytryk is the president of United Senior Citizens of Ontario.

Mrs Margaret Harche was a member of Ontario's Round Table on Elder Abuse, and is a founding member and past chair of the Councils on Aging Network of Ontario.

Mrs Lois Neely was Ontario's representative on Canada's coordinating committee to plan and promote the nationwide celebrations during the 1999 International Year of Older Persons.

Dr Elizabeth Podnieks is my co-chair on Ontario's round table on elder abuse and a professor at Ryerson Polytechnic University School of Nursing.

Ms Dorothy Rivers-Moore is a board member of a number of organizations, including the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly and the Ontario Women's Network.

Mrs Margaret Watson is the chair of Canadian Pensioners Concerned, Ontario region.

It's our honour to welcome them to the House. The members of this House are indebted to you for the contributions you have made to our province and to our country.

I would also like to acknowledge that there are two individuals who could not be with us today: Mrs Lillian Morgenthau, the president and founder of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, who started the organization with a handful of friends and has seen it grow to a powerful body of more than 370,000 seniors from across Canada; and Dr Ken Murray, who leads the Kenneth G. Murray Alzheimer Research and Education Program. Dr Murray is being invested into the Order of Canada today, and that is why he was unable to be with us. He is the driving force behind the Alzheimer research and education program and Canada's first Alzheimer strategy right here in Ontario.

Twenty-four other seniors who have made extraordinary contributions to the life of our province will be presented with a Senior Achievement Award on Monday, June 4, by the Lieutenant Governor and myself and by their members of provincial Parliament, who will be joining them that day. Recipients of this award have recognized needs in their communities and have taken action. Since the first awards of this type in 1986, almost 300 seniors have been honoured for their contributions in the areas of community service, education, science, the arts, recreation, the preservation of history, voluntarism and humanitarian activities.

Our government is committed to helping seniors remain healthy, active and involved members of our communities. As a national comparator, our province is doing more to ensure the best quality of life for our older adults, and we're committed to providing them with the opportunities and choices necessary to maintain all aspects of this wellness.

We have been looking forward into the future at the needs of our aging population and planning accordingly. Our long-term-care investments reflect this kind of forward thinking. This government has increased investments in health care spending by almost \$6 billion. We are increasing spending on long-term-care services alone by \$1.2 billion, the biggest health investment in Ontario's

history. This investment is increasing long-term-care community services by over 50%, adding 20,000 new long-term-care beds and rebuilding 16,000 outdated existing beds. As all members of this House know, long-term-care services are outside of the Canada Health Act. Therefore, Ontario seniors receive no federal support for these services.

Last week, I joined the Minister of Health and Long-term Care when we announced the awarding of funding for the final 5,500 long-term-care beds in our province. These new beds and new facilities will help us meet the needs of our growing and aging population well into the 21st century.

To meet the needs of more than 100,000 Ontarians who suffer with Alzheimer disease, and their families and caregivers, we're investing more than \$68 million over five years in our strategy to combat this terrible Alzheimer's disease and related dementia.

1410

This 10-point strategy is the first of its kind in Canada and is considered one of the top leading programs in North America. We're also working toward a comprehensive strategy to combat elder abuse. This multi-sectoral strategy will be unique in Canada and will benefit Ontario seniors for decades to come.

Last year, the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat partnered with the Ontario Pharmacists' Association to deliver more than 100 safe-medication-use seminars for seniors. As we age, we often need to take more medication and in so doing it is vitally important that seniors know the dangers of not managing their medications correctly.

Many seminars are scheduled to take place during June and these have been designed so that one goes in every single constituency in this province. So every member of the House will have an opportunity to present this seminar to their seniors.

To help protect the health and well-being of seniors in retirement homes, the government funded the Ontario Residential Care Association to establish the first ever province-wide retirement home complaints response and information service. By calling a toll-free number, seniors, their families and retirement home residents can get help to resolve a complaint about any retirement home in Ontario, or they can receive up-to-date information about the full range of services and accommodation options.

It is through a lifetime of hard work and sacrifice by Ontario's seniors that we have such a strong and vibrant province today. Their contributions are enormous. They have built our roads, they have taught in our schools and they have led the development of our communities, our cities and our province as a whole.

Many grew up during the Depression where they learned thrift and priority-setting, and many served in the two world wars to secure our freedom. Seniors continue to this day to make significant contributions as members of boards and commissions, as volunteers and community leaders. To each and every senior in our province we say a collective thank you.

June is Seniors' Month all across Ontario and tomorrow we will be kicking off our celebrations. In Ontario each year, Seniors' Month gives us an opportunity to recognize and thank our seniors for all they have done, and continue to do, to improve the quality of life for all of us who call Ontario home.

Our theme for Seniors' Month 2001 is See Seniors; See Life. We chose the theme as a tribute to the men and women who built this province and to those who still participate and contribute so much to their families and to their communities.

Our theme also reflects the notion of wellness, the wellness of mind, body and spirit.

I encourage my fellow members of this House to take some time during the next month, and throughout the year, to reach out and get connected with the seniors in your communities.

As the year 2001 unfolds, remember See Seniors; See Life; see someone with abundant energy who continues to contribute in so many ways, see someone with vast life and cultural experiences from whom we can learn so much and see someone who deserves our respect.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I'm delighted, on behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal caucus, to acknowledge the seniors in our gallery today and their leadership in our communities, not only now but over decades. We appreciate that very much.

It is most appropriate that we acknowledge Seniors' Month in June and have those presentations made next week honouring the seniors from across the province, because in reality they are the ones who have built this great nation and this great province.

I would however mention, on behalf of the seniors we believe we advocate for, that the government has cut back dramatically the number and amount of services that are provided to those who are seniors in our communities and those who are disabled in the community care access centre program. We know, from calls from every constituency in the province, that people are being rationed, people are being cut off. Seniors we hope would be able to live in their own homes are being deprived of services and I guess ostensibly are going to be moved out of those homes to elsewhere. The government's actions are totally unacceptable.

I also want to speak to my friend the minister responsible for seniors and remind him, as I have reminded him and ministers of health, that in my own constituency, having Espanola turned down for long-term care beds and requiring the people of Espanola to drive over 100 kilometres just to access the long-term care beds, is unacceptable. That decision needs to be reviewed.

I also wonder why this province has chosen not to assist seniors with their energy costs. Other provinces have done that. I have called for it, the member for Renfrew has called for it and the Liberal caucus has called for it. There is no mitigation of the energy costs that will be forcing seniors out their homes.

The delisting of drugs, the fees for prescription drugs, are all great concerns to the seniors of Ontario. I would

ask the government to live up to its rhetoric. We need to help the seniors in our society continue to contribute in a manner we all would prefer.

### PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** It's apparent to me and to everyone in our caucus that the total government on that side has subscribed to the John Snobelen school of create a crisis. A crisis was begun some years ago by this government in terms of G2 licensing. People had to wait 10 and 12 months to receive their licences. It put hardships on the working families of Ontario. It put hardships on students who were attending universities and colleges, who were driving to those facilities as well as trying to earn money to offset the skyrocketing tuitions that we see prevailing through this government.

The government knew for five years that the G2 licensing system was in effect and would at one time have all these clients seeking licences in one fell swoop. People waited 10 months and longer. They moved throughout parts of Ontario, from Toronto to Chatham-Kent, looking for access and a quicker and more efficient way. So the government created a crisis and now they say, "We have to move in and fix it," and they've brought in this privatization bill.

We know that profits will drive these companies. I'm very concerned, as I was with the previous bill, that these companies may not choose to work in remote and rural areas of Ontario. There are no guarantees that the offices we have in existence today would stay open. There are no guarantees that new offices would open in rural and remote parts of Ontario. There is no guarantee that the government will not in future privatize enforcement. As a matter of fact, the minister's own statement today says that "we will continue to pursue alternate service delivery." There is no guarantee this would not happen. There is no guarantee that inspection of such items as school buses would not be privatized in the future by this government. They have not said unequivocally that they would not do that.

The government has created crisis after crisis in Ontario to put their agenda of privatization and other aspects of their mantra forward. I believe we need hearings on this bill. We need to allow the public of Ontario to understand fully what this government has been up to. They can question the government as to why they create a crisis and then bring in privatization bills for the whole of Ontario.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** The Minister of Transportation takes his marching orders from the Minister of Finance, no two ways about it, because the Minister of Transportation has joined this Harris Tory orgy of privatization, where they are prepared to attack and then abandon every facet of a quality, professional public service that has been developed in this province over the course of decades and generations.

In one of the most dangerous moves we've witnessed yet from the Ministry of Transportation, this Minister of

Transportation is prepared to hand over driver testing to the corporate, for-profit private sector. As sure as God made little apples, it'll end up being in the hands of American operators, like so much else has been when it's been privatized by this government, handed over to their corporate friends: public money for private profit, not a penny of which will even stay in the province of Ontario, never mind the country of Canada, but most of which is going to flow into the United States of America.

Shame on this minister for abandoning any concept of highway safety. Doesn't he get it? The reason you have the public service delivering driver examination is to maintain the integrity of it, to ensure it isn't corrupted, to ensure you can't go to the corner store and buy a driver's licence like you can a Bell calling card.

Minister, why don't you start paying attention to the 11 million Ontarians out there instead of the ideological hacks in your cabinet and in your ministry?

1420

### SENIOR CITIZENS

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** On behalf of the NDP, I'd like to recognize the special guests we have in the gallery today who represent very important seniors' organizations in Ontario. I want to say that we appreciate the contribution you have made to Ontario life over many years, and we certainly know that because of your efforts the quality of life in all Ontario communities is that much better.

With respect to the rest of the statement made by the minister, I want to point out that I regret he neglected to note two very critical issues that are facing seniors now, and because he has neglected to do that, I think it's incumbent on me to raise them now.

The first is the use of restraints on seniors in acute care hospitals in Ontario. All members will know that my colleague from Beaches-East York introduced Bill 135 last fall, directly as a result of a terrible experience her mother faced in an Ontario public hospital. That was an experience where she was restrained, not because it was required by medical treatment, not because she didn't know what she was doing, but frankly, probably because there just wasn't enough staff available at that time to deal with her.

We know that hundreds and hundreds of other seniors across this province face that every day in Ontario hospitals. Because of the research she recorded during that debate, we know that the use of restraints in US hospitals is about 17% of seniors, and in Ontario hospitals 33% of seniors are regularly restrained. We know that researchers went into an Ontario hospital last fall. They found that in one public hospital 70% of the patients over 75 years of age were in restraints at 10 am, and there was clear evidence that the use of restraints cause more harm to many seniors.

That bill passed second reading. There were public hearings earlier this fall. Then the government prorogued and that important legislation was lost. I call on this

government to commit that when my colleague reintroduces that important bill to reduce the use of restraints in long-term-care facilities that primarily affect seniors, this government will give quick passage to that important bill.

Second, with respect to the funding for CCACs, CCACs provide important home care for seniors, for the disabled, for those being discharged from hospitals. We know that as a result of providing those services, many more seniors can remain in their own homes, in dignity, in their communities, and we know there is a net effect in terms of a reduction of costs to the health care system because they are not forced into very expensive, long-term-care facilities.

The current situation is that the 43 CCACs right now have provided deficit reductions to the Ministry of Health in the order of \$175 million, and \$80 million of that shortfall just reflects rate increases to services already being provided. The balance reflects the costs for new services.

We know that this year the ministry, although they have every other year funded the shortfalls, funded the deficits to meet that increased need, have now told CCACs it will no longer do that, so CCACs are in the difficult position where they will have to reduce services. There will be a tremendous impact on seniors, the disabled, those being discharged from hospitals when they can't receive in-home care, nursing care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, the rental of medical equipment and the rental of medical supplies or provision of the same.

I say to this government, you have a responsibility to the seniors of this province to fund home care services and meet the needs of seniors, the disabled and those being discharged from hospitals. You've got \$2 billion for a corporate tax cut. Find \$175 million for home care.

**Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In light of the Minister of Transportation's comments, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion that would compel the Minister of Transportation to table the Highway 407 contract with this Legislature within one week.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### EDUCATION FUNDING

#### FINANCEMENT DE L'ÉDUCATION

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My questions today are for the Minister of Education. You will know that yesterday we launched our campaign in defence of public education in Ontario. We're fighting against your plan to take \$500 million out of our public schools and put that money into private schools, and we're fighting for our plan to improve public education that starts with smaller classes for our children.

You should know, Madam Minister, that already since the time you unveiled your plans to ambush Ontario's public education system, something that came unannounced and was not predicted, given your government's record and statements made by the Premier and yourself, we have heard from thousands of Ontarians who are very gravely concerned about your plan for private school vouchers. They want a full and meaningful opportunity to voice their concerns to you.

Will you now agree that, instead of that mockery of a hearing process which you plan to put in place, that sham, you will grant Ontario families a full opportunity through public hearings to be conducted during the course of the summer dedicated to your private school voucher plan alone?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Again, as the honourable member has heard me say in this Legislature many times, there are no hearings going to be occurring on a school voucher program because that is not the proposal before us.

First, I know the honourable member likes to claim he is for smaller class sizes. I will repeat yet again that on two separate occasions in this Legislature when there was legislation before this House to put limits on class size, he and his party voted against it. So let's just be clear on this record.

Second, our commitment to public education on this side of the House is as strong today as it was when we were first elected. There is no one proposing taking money from public education and putting it anywhere else, and everyone on this side of the House would oppose it if there were.

Third, I would suggest, based on the latest Canadian Jewish News that is talking about the fights among his own caucus members on this issue, perhaps the honourable member would pay a little more attention to his home base.

**Mr McGuinty:** The fact that you are prepared to take \$500 million out of public education and put that money into private education tells us you are not fully aware of the state of public education today in Ontario. That's a darned good reason why you need prolonged committee hearings, so that you have a full opportunity to hear from parents right across the province who will better inform you as to the state of education in their children's public schools.

Just to bring you down to ground level here, Madam Minister, here is a textbook that we received from a high school in Ontario, the Thomas H. Stewart high school in Peterborough. This is a history textbook that is available in the classroom, and if you will take a look at this, you will see that this book is literally falling apart. We asked the school and we asked the board why they weren't purchasing new textbooks. They told us they don't have enough money to buy new textbooks for their students.

At a time when we don't have enough money to buy textbooks for our students in public schools, we're wondering why you have now become firmly committed

and devoted to the cause of private education in Ontario. What we need is a full, extensive and ample opportunity for you to become better acquainted with the state of public education in Ontario. That means meaningful hearings. Can we have those meaningful hearings this summer?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member again keeps putting forward information in this Legislature that is simply not accurate. No one on this side of the House is proposing or supporting taking money from public education to put toward anything, period—end of story.

Secondly, perhaps the honourable member would like to second-guess the decisions of school board trustees, because that is clearly what he's doing. We have, for example, in this province school board trustees who actually said to their community that they were going to take textbook money and use it for their teacher compensation plan. Those trustees were re-elected by their community. If the honourable member is now asking us to pass laws retroactively to prevent school trustees from making those decisions, he should say so.

**Mr McGuinty:** What I'm asking you to do, on behalf of the Mike Harris government, is to take responsibility for public education. You're devoting all of your time and energy of late to private education. You're not accountable for private education. Your responsibility is not private education; your responsibility is public education and the 96% of Ontario families who rely on public education. That is your job.

People for Education are telling us that, province-wide, parents in elementary schools are raising \$25 million every year now for classroom supplies like textbooks. Forty-two per cent of our public schools are involved in raising money. We have children in Ontario who are selling chocolate bars for dictionaries and atlases. All this at a time when you've come up with \$500 million for private education.

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Once again, Madam Minister, it has become painfully apparent to all that you are disconnected from the reality of public education. What our parents need throughout the province is an opportunity to educate you as to what is going on in their children's schools. In order to do that, I am asking you on their behalf if they might not have the opportunity during the course of this summer to participate in province-wide committee hearings dedicated to your private school voucher plan.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Yet again, since the honourable member doesn't seem to listen frequently in this Legislature: there is more money being spent on public education in this province, as there should be. In 1995, when this government was elected, there was \$12.9 billion available for public education; today, it is \$13.8 billion—above and beyond enrolment growth, \$800 million more directly in classrooms, the biggest school building boom we've seen in this province in literally years, new money, new investments in the public education system. Why did we do that? Because we know—I know on this side, because I've been in the schools. I've

talked to teachers; I've talked to parents; I've talked to students, because that is my job. I do not need lectures from the honourable member trying to make political points on the backs of parents and on the backs of students about how to do my job. I would suggest that he look to his own caucus and his own reputation and his own credibility on this particular issue, since he continues to not know which side he's going to be on.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** New question, leader of the official opposition.

**Mr McGuinty:** Madam Minister, my second set of questions is also for you. I want to talk to you more specifically about special education and its state today in Ontario. After all, you have the special responsibility through our public schools to help ensure that parents are having the special learning needs of their children met.

People for Education tell us that today in Ontario, 35,000 children at the elementary level alone are waiting to be assessed for special education. They tell us that over the course of the last three years, there has been a 38% reduction in the availability in services of psychologists. I can tell you that in my hometown alone, Ottawa, we have gone from, during the course of the last four years, 33 school psychologists to 14. Some schools are reporting to the People for Education group that they have no access to a single board psychologist.

Madam Minister, in your capacity as the person ultimately responsible for public education in Ontario and understanding the predicament at least 35,000 parents of 35,000 children with special learning needs find themselves in, why is it that you have \$500 million for private schools, but you don't have money to help children with special learning needs in Ontario?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I know it may be a surprise to the honourable member that there are more needs in special education. Of course there are. That is not news to this government. That is why we have been meeting and consulting with the special education community. That is why we increased special education money last year over 12%. That's why we're bringing in standards for how that money is used, quality standards for programs, to try and fix the neglect that they've left in special education that we saw under his government and the previous government. Do you know what? Here we go again. The honourable member, who says he's so supportive of public education—when we had legislation here in this House that said a school board could not use a dollar of special education money for anything else, who voted against it? The honourable member and his entire party.

**Mr McGuinty:** Let me tell you, Madam Minister, about Eric Stewart, a young man of 10 years of age in my riding, who suffers from a learning disability. His father, Blayne Stewart, sent you a letter on May 17, and I will quote from that letter. He says, "We've had to move our son from school to school over the past five years due to the many cutbacks in the special education for the school boards here in Ottawa. No matter what you say or how you say it or how you configure it using financial statements, your government has continually cut back, to the

point where children such as my son are given second-class treatment."

He goes on to say, "I would like you to be in our shoes for just a day and go through the angst of wondering how your child is going to make it in this world and meeting with teachers and begging for extra help."

Madam Minister, on behalf of Eric Stewart and his parents, and parents just like that across the province, why is it that you have \$500 million for private education but you don't have any money to help children like Eric right across Ontario?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The magical figure the honourable member loves to throw around, even though he knows it's not an accurate number—this magical number of \$500 million—maybe he thinks \$500 million is all the special-needs students need, but there is more than \$1.3 billion, money that is out there to help support parents who take care of special-needs children, teachers who are so committed to those special-needs students. It is an important priority, as it should be, because those young children can achieve, can succeed, if they get the right support.

Not only have we increased resources in the schools for special needs across this province—and is there more need? Of course there is, and we are the first to admit it. We are the first to say we are taking steps to try and resolve it. But we have also increased resources and money for those families with those important needs for special-needs kids in social services as well, not only when I was social services minister—

**The Speaker:** Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, I want to remind you that it was you through your letter and the Premier through his letter who told us that we were looking at from \$300 million to \$700 million that would have to come out of public education in order to provide for your voucher program. You're the people who put that on the record, and I believed that, Madam Minister. I believed that when you said that, and I believed that when the Premier said it.

I think the issue here is whether or not you are committed to public education. But the facts speak to the contrary. For the last several weeks now, you have become particularly devoted to the matter of private education in Ontario. We have raised now for years the poor and miserable state of public education in Ontario: we have children who are short of textbooks, you've cut back on busing, you've cut back on special education, we have teachers who are stressed out, we have overcrowded classrooms, we've got an atmosphere that is poisoned by your brand of politics, and yet, in the midst of all this, suddenly you can find \$500 million for private education.

On behalf of our working families, Madam Minister, when are you going to assume your responsibility and stand up for public education?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** With all due respect to the honourable member, first of all, our commitment and my commitment to public education stands. That is why we have

put more money into public education—higher standards, curriculum.

Not only that; the member likes to say that he is for smaller class sizes, he likes to say that he is for more resources for special-needs parents, and yet when he had the choice to vote for something that would improve public education, he chose not to. When he had an opportunity to say where he stood on the funding to respect parental choice, he chose to be on both sides of the issue.

Secondly or thirdly or whatever point we are, this side of the House believes that parents have a right to choose. We respect those hard-working Ontario families in our riding; I don't know why he and his members are not respecting what they're hearing from those Ontario working families in their ridings.

**The Speaker:** New question, the leader of the third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Finance. My question is about the secret backroom hearings you gave to a special interest group pushing for public funding of private schools. The special interest group spent \$175,000 to be heard, and they got eight months of secret, private backroom hearings from your government. At the same time, you refuse our repeated calls for just 80 days of province-wide public hearings so the rest of Ontario can be heard.

Minister, tell me, how can you give a special interest group eight months of private backroom hearings and discussions and refuse the rest of the people of Ontario just 80 days of province-wide hearings on the same issue?

1440

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** There were extensive pre-budget consultations in Ontario this year. As Minister of Finance, I met with in excess of 350 people. There are countless submissions made. We don't view meeting with people as an improper thing to do. We view it as our duty as members of cabinet, as members of caucus on this side of the House. Our doors are open. That's our policy.

We certainly listened to all of the pre-budget submissions. We were not able to agree with all of the submissions, of course. We had to be fiscally prudent, manage Ontario's finances prudently, balance the budget and keep our taxes low and competitive so we can have the vibrant economy we have in Ontario today.

**Mr Hampton:** There's a problem with your answer, Minister. The fact of the matter is, this special interest group didn't come to the pre-budget hearings. Not only that, but they didn't even bother putting in a written submission. They were nowhere on the screen. The reason they were nowhere is because they were getting private backroom hearings exclusively from your government.

Minister, all the people who appeared at the pre-budget hearings, all the people who asked for more funding for special education, all the people who asked for more funding to ensure that there were textbooks in the classroom, to ensure that we had smaller class sizes, were

ignored. They're asking you now, since you gave eight months of backroom hearings to a special interest group that didn't even come to the pre-budget hearings and make a case there, will you now listen to the rest of the people of Ontario for just 80 days? Doesn't that seem fair?

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** If the member opposite has some information about a particular group that did not come to pre-budget consultations and that made some kind of secret backroom meetings, I'd like to know about it. I'd like to know who you're talking about.

If you're talking about the parents of Sikh children, the parents of Ismaili children, the parents of Jewish children, the parents of Christian children and parents with children in independent schools, if you're talking about them, then I wish you'd say so. If you think it was improper for me as Minister of Finance to meet with them, then you're entitled to your view. I think it is our duty on this side of the House to be open and available to all members of Ontario society, particularly in our diverse society, the way Ontario has changed over the past 25 years. I think that's our duty as elected members of this place.

**Mr Hampton:** Your duty, if you are going to make such a fundamental change in Ontario's education system, is to at least have the courage to go out there and listen to people across this province and hold public hearings so they have a say.

The group that boasts in their letter, the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, says quite clearly that their staff developed the tax credit proposal last fall and until this April with your government, and they persuaded, over that eight-month period, your government to do it. They point out that they spent \$175,000 getting private backroom hearings. If you're going to give a special interest group private backroom hearings, if they don't even have to come to the pre-budget committee hearings, Minister, don't you think that the rest of the people of Ontario who overwhelmingly rely upon the public education system at least deserve 80 days of hearings when you gave the special interest group hearings over eight months? Where's your sense of fairness? Commit to the 80 days of hearings.

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** As usual, the leader of the third party has most of his facts wrong. This is a party that, when they were in government, paid \$50,000 to a union to compose a song.

If you think we should not meet with certain groups in Ontario, if you think we should discriminate against certain groups in this province, if you think that's the right way for a government to act, you are entitled to your view. That's not my view. Our doors are open. As I say, in the pre-budget consultation we meet with more than 350 groups, including groups from all kinds of areas of the province and with different agendas, quite frankly, but that's our duty. We have to be open, we have to listen, and then we have to make responsible choices. In our view, the choices we've made, that we've put before this House in the budget bill and in the budget docu-

ments, are responsible choices for the people of Ontario, not \$50,000 to a union for a song.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Hampton:** To the Minister of Finance: if you claim you want to be open, then you'll be holding province-wide public hearings for 80 days on your proposal, because the Ontario Alliance for Christian Schools didn't even bother to go to the pre-budget hearings. They didn't even bother to put in a written submission, because they knew they'd paid the \$175,000 and they were going to get backdoor access.

Minister, all those people you've ignored—the students, the parents, the educators—are going to be out here on the lawn of the Legislature at 6 pm tonight at a rally that the NDP is hosting. They want you to hold province-wide public hearings, 80 days. That's what you demanded 16 years ago. It was fair then; it should be fair now. Minister, if you're open, will you hold 80 days of province-wide public hearings so the rest of Ontario can be heard?

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** As you know, Speaker, our government has had more days of public hearings on bills than his government did from 1990 to 1995 or the Liberals did during their time.

We're committed to public hearings, which has been made clear several times here, with respect to Bill 45. The budget bill will be going to committee, as it went to committee last year, as budget bills went to committee during the Liberal government for several years, 1985 to 1990. So there will be additional consultations in addition to the very elaborate consultations which I did as Minister of Finance with the help of my parliamentary assistants during the three months or so leading up to the budget.

There were submissions, I might also tell the honourable member—his facts are wrong. If he wants to check the list of submissions from various sources, he'll see the accurate facts.

**Mr Hampton:** I have the list right here with me, and I challenge you to step outside the House and show us where that particular special interest group made a submission to the committee, because your facts are wrong and you better know it.

Let me give you an example of a group that will not be heard in the Toronto-only public hearings you're proposing. Aucune communauté franco-ontarienne n'aura l'occasion de participer aux audiences publiques à cause de cette décision. Chaque Franco-Ontarien sera exclu du processus. Il est évident que les francophones dans cette province ne comptent pas avec votre gouvernement.

Minister, it's a simple request. There are people across Ontario who will be affected by your government's proposal to use public money to fund private schools. In 1985, when we were considering support for separate schools, your party demanded 80 days of public hearings and you got them. That's what people are demanding now, 80 days of public hearings across the province. If it was good enough then, commit to it now, Minister.

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** Again, the member opposite has his facts wrong. I certainly heard from representatives of the Christian schools, of the Jewish schools, the Muslim schools, the Greek schools, the Sikh schools and independent schools generally. Yes, I have the list of the people I met with, too. You know, it's important that we are open and available to meet with people, particularly when a finance minister is preparing a budget.

One of the problems on the other side of the House is your view, and you hear this from the Liberals and you hear it from the NDP, that there's something called public money that belongs to them or belongs to government. We on this side of the House know that government can't give anything to anybody that government hasn't already taken away in the first place. This money belongs to the people of Ontario. It doesn't belong to the NDP and it doesn't belong to the Liberals with their confiscatory taxation policies from 1985 to 1995 that virtually ruined the province of Ontario. We've got this ship turned around and we've got it going in the right direction—a vibrant economy, prosperity. What a great province to live in.

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#### SAFE DRINKING WATER LEGISLATION

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, yesterday you were out at a photo opportunity with Imperial Esso, which produces the dirtiest gas in all of Ontario, and no doubt there will be a few other photo ops that your staff will trot you out to. Meanwhile at the Walkerton inquiry, some disturbing and revealing testimony is emerging about the danger in which your government was placing the drinking water in this province by massive cuts to the environment staff and budget.

A 1996 document tabled at the inquiry on May 28 stated, "... reductions will have an adverse impact on the delivery of environmental protection service levels, which in turn will increase public health and safety risks."

Godfrey Jenkins of your ministry, an expert in water, testified that the staff cuts severely hampered the ability of the remaining professionals to do their job.

Your government was warned clearly and repeatedly that the slashing of the staff and the budget would place drinking water safety in jeopardy, yet the only response came in the form of inaccurate hocus-pocus designed to paint a rather soothing picture.

Minister, have you received or have you seen any staff memos or correspondence warning you of the dangerous consequences of your failure to proceed quickly with legislation and regulations dealing with intensive livestock operations, the spreading of sewage sludge on farmland, abandoned wells and water-taking permits, and if you have, will you make those public today?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of the Environment):** As the member knows, the commission is taking

a look at all the information. Obviously, I'm not in a position to speak to any of the information which is being presented to the inquiry. However, I can assure the member opposite that this government has taken steps to ensure that the water consumed in this province is safe.

As you know, we have introduced the safe drinking water protection regulation. We have Operation Clean Water, to ensure that the water is tested and sampled and that the information is made available to the public.

I can also assure the member that when the report is tabled and recommendations are forthcoming, we will certainly move forward with those recommendations. We share his concern for public health and protection of public health.

**Mr Bradley:** Minister, you have had recommendations from both the Provincial Auditor and two Environmental Commissioners about what you should do to protect the safety of water in this province.

At the inquiry, Sheila Willis, assistant deputy minister, operations division, testified to the following: "Constraints on the operations division will also have a detrimental impact on many client services, such as increased environmental risk resulting from our inability to conduct proactive inspections or devote time to thorough review of approvals, and a reduction in available scientific expertise within the division to support district staff ... reduced levels of responsiveness."

Goff Jenkins, when asked, "And did the substantial layoffs that did take place leave the drinking water experts short of resources and support staff?" his answer was, "In my opinion, certainly."

Our critic in the field of agriculture, Steve Peters, has filed a freedom-of-information request, trying to get some information about the spreading of sewage sludge. You have done nothing on sewage sludge yet. You've done nothing on livestock operations yet. You have abandoned wells all over the province that you are not looking after.

Do you have any memos in your ministry about this and any correspondence, and will you make those memos public so we're not put through another \$2-million or \$3-million inquiry as we bleed those memos out of you?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I can share with you the information that I have been working on with my colleague the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs to ensure that farming activities are properly managed. I believe that's the question you're asking.

Obviously we need to do everything we can to ensure that this province's environment and water are properly protected. I can tell you that several models are currently being evaluated for the regulation of agricultural operations in Ontario, and enforcement is certainly part of what is being considered.

#### STRATFORD FESTIVAL

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. Earlier this week I was pleased to host you in my riding

for the opening of the 49th season of the Stratford Festival.

As you know, the Stratford Festival plays a vital role in the economy of my riding. It generates about \$340 million in economic activity every year, it creates more than 6,000 jobs and accounts for 12% of the tourism in southwestern Ontario.

Given the importance of the festival as a major cultural tourism attraction, can you tell me what you are doing to help it grow and welcome audiences for another 49 seasons?

**Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation):** I thank the member for Perth-Middlesex for his question and for his ongoing support for institutions like the Stratford Festival and the Stratford Gallery in his riding of Perth-Middlesex.

There was certainly an outstanding performance of the Merchant of Venice this past Monday, which shows that Stratford is still on the cutting edge of bringing in new audiences, expanding their opportunities and putting on outstanding performances.

The first best option, of course, is to support these industries and cultural tourism so they can move off and be independent and try to take advantage of new business opportunities and new audiences and be quicker to respond to markets, and Stratford leads the way. In fact, as the member knows, some 96% of the revenue now is self-driven.

In order to help them expand their customer base and offer new products, they started a new series called Canada At Play, which is for new plays at Stratford. As part of that, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation provided a cheque of \$300,000 to help support that initiative to bring in new audiences and to support the great work of the member for Perth-Middlesex.

**Mr Johnson:** I wanted also to highlight the visit that you made on April 21, when you visited the town of St Marys and were welcomed in both the old and the new part of the Stonetown library, the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame museum, as well as the Milverton Arena and the former normal school that's right in Stratford.

The Stratford Festival is an example of how theatre can not only enrich our culture and our communities, but attract jobs and investment. What are you doing to promote other theatre organizations in Ontario so they can attract more audiences and become more self-sustaining as well?

**Hon Mr Hudak:** The member makes a good point. Cultural tourism has great potential in the province of Ontario and to get them to stay in Stratford, for example, longer, spend more money in the community and visit the other attractions the member mentioned.

My friend from Niagara Falls behind me says, "What about Shaw?" in his riding of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Certainly, the Shaw Festival as well has brought forward Theatrical Adventures in Wine Country, an innovative program to bring together the theatre, the wineries in the area and the hotels and motels to encourage longer stays and more investment in that community. The ministry is

pleased to support that initiative as well, which I announced about a week ago in that riding, for the member for Niagara Falls, Bart Maves.

In the city of Toronto as well, there is a dynamic theatre sector, the third-largest in the English-speaking world. Winter in Toronto is again one of these package deals, where they stay in the community, they see a play, stay at a hotel and, of course, go down and see the Haida.

## DOCTORS' SERVICES

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** My question is to the Minister of Health. There is a most disturbing situation in Essex county caused by the wrong-headed actions of your ministry. CBC national television covered this travesty on Health Matters.

You claim to be committed to solving the doctor shortage, yet you are forcing the closure of the clinic of a dedicated community radiologist in Windsor. Our communities desperately need this clinic. The chief of staff of Windsor Regional Hospital said the health of the citizens of Essex county will be compromised if it closes. The district health council has also acknowledged the radiology shortage.

This community-based clinic employs 20 people to meet the critical needs of clients and citizens who are short eight radiologists. Staff and equipment are all funded by the specialist retention exemption of Dr Charles Gervais. But this year it has been cancelled because you say we no longer have a shortage. How can they pay staff and keep the lights on?

You talk of accountability and transparency for others, yet you refuse a list of all radiologists used in your calculations. We want the numbers and the names. Will you send them over to me today?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I thank the honourable member for the question. Of course, I will certainly take his question under advisement to pursue some of the details.

I can tell the honourable member that just last week I was in the community of Windsor, opening up the brand-spanking-new regional cancer centre, which of course is going to make the lives of cancer sufferers in the Windsor-Lambton area a lot better. I think there's a lot more access to treatment, a lot more modern medical equipment. So that of course is good news in the Windsor-Essex-Lambton area.

On the honourable member's question, I'd be happy to take it under advisement and get some answers for him.

**1500**

**Mr Hoy:** Minister, you should know that the doctor himself is sending you 50 to 100 faxes a day on behalf of patients and it's also appeared on the national news.

Minister, you know that many private, for-profit radiology operators have closed clinics in small communities where it isn't profitable enough for them, leaving the patients high and dry. The clinic in Windsor could help these underserviced areas. It has state-of-the-art digital equipment that could be utilized long-distance. A plan to

show you how this equipment could be used to solve the radiology shortage province-wide was sent to you. That solution has been ignored. Now I hear that you may be considering a bailout of for-profit clinics. I hope that's not true, unless you are willing to give the same assistance to community-based clinics like Dr Gervais's.

The citizens of our community need to know that they will receive the same benefits as any other community experiencing a radiology shortage. They are watching in Windsor today. Tell them why their community is no longer considered underserviced. Then, if you refuse to accept the error in your numbers, assure them that every community will benefit from any bailout that you might be considering.

**Hon Mr Clement:** First of all, I want to assure this House that in terms of funding for cancer services, there has been no change of policy. We have been increasing that funding year upon year. I'm sure that will be—unfortunately, because it means there are cancer sufferers in our province—due to continue.

I can tell the honourable member that this province, on behalf of the people of Ontario, has made a significant investment in Windsor by virtue of the creation and the opening of the regional cancer centre. I take the honourable member's question under advisement. If there is a better way to deliver better, safer, faster, cheaper cancer services in his community, certainly we'll take it under advisement.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, recently there have been discussions in the Legislature from time to time on the issue of workplace injuries as well as workplace fatalities. When the Liberal labour critic, the member for Hamilton East, introduced his private member's bill a few weeks ago, he indicated that the numbers of incidents were climbing.

I know members of this caucus are always interested in this topic, as are my constituents in Durham, about the issue of safety in the workplace. They want to know what our government is doing to correct this problem and to protect our workers. Can you tell the members of this House what the Ministry of Labour is doing to reduce injuries and potential fatalities in the workplace?

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** Thanks for the question from the member for Durham. I want to say that the number of inspections that have taken place in the ministry has significantly increased, as well as the actual charges that have been laid and convictions as well.

It's also important to note, although there was a lot of hyperbole and rhetoric surrounding this particular issue, that the number of workplace-related injuries has decreased since 1995 by 30%. So understand that although it's not perfect and although any injury is a bad thing, the number of workplace-related injuries has gone down by

30%. That's also coupled with the fact that more people are out there working today than when we came to office.

We understand the concern for workplace safety. We know that kids are going to go to work for summer jobs very shortly. We want to alert them to the fact of workplace safety and the right to refuse. But we also want it to be clear out there that the number is going in the right direction, we're proud of that accomplishment and we think it's important to continue the good work.

**Mr O'Toole:** Thank you very much for that very sensitive and very direct response, Minister. A 30% reduction certainly shows that we're making progress as we move forward.

However, the member opposite, in his private member's bill, suggests that he would raise fines on both individuals and corporations who are convicted of an offence under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Could you please update, not just me, of course, but all of the people of Ontario, and indeed clarify what levels of fine are going to be imposed on those who have endangered the safety of workers in Ontario?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** The workplace safety fines have in fact been imposed over a number of years and they've been updated fairly regularly.

I want to just be clear with respect to maximum fines. Never have we had a situation where a maximum fine has been levelled. The courts understand that they can level fines up to a certain amount, but never has a maximum fine been met. I'm not suggesting that those maximum fines shouldn't be reviewed all the time—

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** Stockwell for mayor.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** If the member for Riverdale wants to comment, I'm interested in hearing from her.

But you have to understand that just simply increasing the fines doesn't necessarily equate to having increased fines. There's a certain apportionment to that amount and we've never met that level.

I've got to tell you, from 1995 until today there are more workers out there. The Liberals often talk, and the NDP, about the working people, working families. Well, the big difference between this government and that government is, the big difference between working families and this government's administration is, they're actually working. That's a good thing.

So we are conscious of our concerns. We're careful that we've got to watch workplace safety and we think it's an important issue and we will continue to work to have safer workplaces.

#### COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, yesterday under questions from my colleague, the member for Beaches-East York, about impending cutbacks to home care services, you said, and I quote, "We're in the process of discussion" of whether to cover the budget needs of the community care access centres.

But at the same time that you were saying that here, your assistant deputy minister, John King, was telling the CCACs from Hamilton, from Sudbury, from across the province something totally different. He told the CCACs that there will be no increase in their base funding, no equity funding, no help from your government to meet the home care needs of increasing numbers of senior citizens from across the province.

You know this will lead to almost immediate cutbacks in necessary home care services for seniors, for the disabled, for those recently discharged from hospital. But Minister, I want to know. You told one story in here; your assistant deputy minister told a different story. Which story should the home care patients across the province believe?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I thank the honourable member for the question. Indeed in his prologue the honourable member neglected to mention that this government has increased funding for CCACs by over 72%, which is a matter of public record and should be on the record with respect to this discussion.

The honourable member mentioned two particular CCACs. I want to put this on the record as well. Hamilton-Wentworth under the last year of his government received \$35.6 million; under our government this past year it received \$53.1 million. Manitoulin-Sudbury under their government received \$17.1 million; under our government it received \$20.7 million. Those facts speak louder than his rhetoric.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Supplementary?

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** The question was, who are home care patients to believe? The Manitoulin-Sudbury CCAC has a projected deficit of \$1.8 million this year. Despite a specific commitment that was made by the former Minister of Long-Term Care, Cam Jackson, in August 1998 to our community, and I quote, "Starting in 2000-01 and in each of the next five years, the Manitoulin-Sudbury CCAC will receive additional funding based on our equity formula," the Manitoulin-Sudbury CCAC did not receive one cent of equity funding last year and has not received one cent of equity funding this year, Minister.

As a result, the Manitoulin-Sudbury CCAC has announced a dramatic plan to cut homemaking services, nursing services, occupational physio and speech therapy services, the provision of medical supplies and the rental of medical equipment, all of which will have a dramatic negative effect on seniors, the disabled and those being discharged in my community. They can't afford to pay for it, they will go without, they will be forced into long-term-care institutions because you refuse to fund the home care services they need.

The question is, Minister, who are home care patients in Sudbury to believe? Are you going to fund the deficit in Manitoulin-Sudbury and are you going to fund the equity funding that your government promised as long ago as 1998?

**Hon Mr Clement:** You asked the question, "Who should they believe?" They certainly shouldn't believe you. This government provided more funding, as I've outlined in the answer to the first question, and more equitable funding than that government ever did in the five years of funding for home care that they did.

Do you want to know what my assistant deputy minister said to them? He said—now wait for this—"They must live within their budgets," something you never said in the five years of your government. It's probably news to your ears to say to someone who is a transfer partner, "Live within your budgets." That's the way the taxpayers and the citizens of Ontario expect the province to be run. You never said it in five years of government. You don't deserve to govern.

1510

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Minister of Finance and it has to do with the education tax credit. In January 2000, about 15 months ago, the government was very clear in its policy. It said very clearly that "extending funding to religious private schools would result in fragmentation of the education system in Ontario and undermine the goal of universal access to education." You also presented documentation on why you reached that conclusion. What you said in that, among other things, was that if you "were required to fund private religious schools, this would have a detrimental impact on the public schools and hence the fostering of a tolerant, multicultural, non-discriminatory society in the province," that that would be the result. You also said that extending public school funding rights to private religious schools will undermine our ability to "build social cohesion, tolerance and understanding." You went on to say in your brief that it would undermine our ability to create a tolerant society and truly protect religious freedom.

Those were the reasons why, about 15 months ago, you rejected this. Have I summarized the key reasons why, 15 months ago, you rejected extending funding?

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** We have rejected funding to private schools. We have consistently done that. The funding proposal that we have created and that has been put forward in the budget bill is a tax credit. It is a tax credit for parents who choose, for their own reasons, for family reasons, to educate their children in certain traditions, in certain ways. That is a choice which we respect as a government. I understand that the opposition, the Liberal Party, has changed its mind about that. In May 1999 the Leader of the Opposition said, "Ideologically I'm not opposed to funding for Jewish schools." Today in the Toronto Star I read, "We will repeal private school tax credits when we form the government after the next election."

Our position on this side of the House is clear. I don't know what the position is on that side of the House: not opposed or opposed?

**Mr Phillips:** You spelled out why you were opposed very clearly 15 months ago. I want to read you what I regard as an extremely hard-hitting paragraph that frankly I agree with, and it's your own paragraph. It says Ontario "submits that one of the strengths of a public system of education is that it provides a venue where people of all colours, races, national and ethnic origins, and religions interact and try to come to terms with one another's differences. In this way, the public schools build social cohesion, tolerance and understanding. Extending public school funding"—and these are your words—"rights to private religious schools will undermine this ability and may result in a significant increase in the number and kind of private schools. This would have an adverse effect on the viability of the public school system which would become the system serving students not found admissible by any other system. Such potential fragmentation of the school system is an expensive and debilitating structure for society."

It couldn't be clearer, Minister. You spelled out the exact concerns my leader has been raising since you introduced this. I say again to you, if you believed that 15 months ago, and if those were the reasons you rejected it 15 months ago, can you tell us why we will not have exactly the same impact with the proposal that you now have in our budget?

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** I was following the honourable member's question until he started talking about his leader's clear position, because it's a bit foggy when in 1999 he says, "I am not opposed to funding for Jewish schools," and this morning I gather his party paid \$50,000 to say that they would repeal the proposed bill, assuming it would be passed.

We have been clear in favour of choice. From 1993 to 1994, in the Blueprint for Learning, we talked about choice for parents, choice for parents and their children. We are fully committed to full funding for public education in Ontario, to honouring the funding formula, which includes not only the public schools but also the Catholic schools and the francophone schools. But in addition, the government proposes to show respect for the choices of parents for their families, for their children, for their educational choices by investing additional funds for a tax credit for those parents. We respect their choices. The opposition apparently does not, but that may change from day to day.

#### FISH AND WILDLIFE LEGISLATION

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** My question is directed to the Minister of Natural Resources. My understanding is that residents of Wawa are extremely distressed with your ministry. It's beyond my comprehension why your overworked conservation officers would have time to seize Henrietta, a stuffed moose, from a storefront in downtown Wawa. The residents have a yellow ribbon campaign in an effort to free Henrietta and have her returned. Minister, I have read to children in Northumberland about Mucky the moose, but I've never

heard tell of Henrietta the moose before. Can you report on why Henrietta was seized, what is happening to her and when she will be returned?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources):** I thank the member from Northumberland for a question that's on the minds of many people in this chamber. I know the member from Algoma-Manitoulin approached me on this earlier this week. He was quite concerned. I told the member I didn't know whether the responsibility reposed with me since my ministry does not have responsibility for the Upholstered and Stuffed Articles Act, and Henrietta the moose is, if nothing else, a stuffed article. But I can assure the member that from that time, I have now acquired an eight-week-old puppy named Jake and he has left the entrails of stuffed articles all over my house and barn. I now know more about stuffed articles.

I want to assure the member from Northumberland, the member from Algoma-Manitoulin and the people of Wawa that to us at the Ministry of Natural Resources, Henrietta is more than simply evidence, and that she is being very well cared for.

**Mr Galt:** Thank you very much, Minister, for that report on Henrietta and thank you for the answer. If I may follow up on a matter just a little more serious, can you tell us of the importance of carefully managing Ontario's fish and wildlife, and tell us some of the improvements brought in by this government in the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, which came into effect in January 1999?

#### Interjections.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** It is often difficult to address these serious issues over the heckling, particularly when it comes from this side of the Legislature, but I can tell the member from Northumberland that we updated the Game and Fish Act a few years ago. It had not previously been revised since 1980. The new act, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, allows us to do more protecting of our fish and wildlife in Ontario.

Specifically, we can now manage a broader range of both game species such as moose, wild turkey and black bear and specially protected wildlife species such as the northern flying squirrel, the peregrine falcon and, a favourite of my seatmate here, the blue-spotted salamander. In addition to these, we have much better provisions for the protection of species across the spectrum right across the province. I thank the member.

1520

#### EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston):** I have a question for the Minister of Health. Humber River Hospital in my riding has been in a state of crisis ever since your government decided to close Northwestern General. With that closure, our community lost an emergency room. As a result, Humber River has been on ambulance redirect and bypass at a greater rate than any other Toronto area hospital. My question is this, Minister: How many times has Humber River Hospital

been on ambulance redirect and bypass since the closure of Northwestern General?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** What I can tell the honourable member is that this government has supplied to the hospital sector more resources, more financial resources, more directed medical personnel, more directed nurse personnel, for emergency services than any other government in the history of Ontario, most recently just in the past fiscal year. We have worked with the hospitals. We have worked with them on a patient priority system that ensures the right patients are treated by the right physicians at the right time. This has been part of our policy from day one. We had a further iteration of it this year with the patient priority system.

If the honourable member has a particular example he wishes to share with us, we can take it under advisement, but I can assure the honourable member that his hospital is no different from other hospitals in Ontario, getting more resources to deal with emergency situations in a timely manner.

**Mr Cordiano:** That's simply not true. This government demands accountability from others—

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Hey. You're not supposed to say that.

**Mr Cordiano:** The facts don't bear that out. This government demands—

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: With respect, I believe the honourable member has said something unparliamentary. I think he should withdraw it, sir.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** I was checking my time—

**Mr Cordiano:** I withdraw if it was unparliamentary.

**The Speaker:** I thank the member for his gracious continue.

**Mr Cordiano:** The fact remains that this government demands accountability from others, but when it's asked to share information that could put it in a bad light, it exempts itself from any accountability. As a matter of fact, prior to 1998, the Ministry of Health regularly released data regarding ambulance redirect and critical bypass. Since then we haven't seen any of those data released. When our staff requested this information through a freedom of information request, we were refused on the grounds that, "This disclosure could be expected to seriously threaten the safety of an individual." Well, Minister, it is your refusal to release that information that seriously threatens the people in my riding. I want to ask you again: when will you release that vital information so that the public is safeguarded?

**Hon Mr Clement:** First of all, let me state for the record that the actual number has been \$700 million in new dollars for emergency services since 1995, the most recent of which is to help pay for a patient priority system that allows the individual hospitals to converse properly with the individual ambulance drivers and the dispatch, to ensure that we know the type of acuity the

driver is driving to a particular hospital to make sure no person is turned away, to make sure each individual hospital is aware of the type of acuity before the patient arrives there, and to make sure the person is treated fairly and comprehensively upon arrival.

That is the new patient priority system. It has been applauded by the hospital sector; it has been applauded by the dispatch sector; it has been applauded by the ambulance drivers. We had an independent expert panel offer these conclusions, which we in turn 100% accepted. If the honourable member has a problem with that, he's the only person.

#### VICTIM EMPOWERMENT LEGISLATION

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** My question today is for the Minister of Correctional Services. As part of our government's ongoing commitment to strengthen and protect victims' rights, unlike of course what members opposite have ever done, and to create safer communities, your ministry introduced Bill 60, called the Victim Empowerment Act, on Monday, May 28. This bill, if passed, would allow victims of crime to attend parole hearings, which currently they are unable to do. The bill also proposes monitoring inmates' phone calls and grooming standards for inmates.

There are some critics of this bill who have argued that parole hearings should be open to the media and the public. Can you tell us more about how these initiatives will help to enhance community safety, as well as institutional safety, and encourage respect and accountability.

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services):** To my honourable colleague, the name of the bill is the Victim Empowerment Act because that's indeed what it does. It gives victims some empowerment in the justice system so they can play a more meaningful role in things like parole hearings. Currently, under the parole hearings, victims are allowed to submit written submissions to the parole board that's doing the hearing. They can have a communication with members of the parole board before the parole hearing. This act, if passed, will allow victims to actually participate in the parole hearings, to physically be there, make deputations in front of the parole board member and the potential paroled, hear from the paroled the reasons why they think they should be entitled to an early release from jail, and, frankly, hear the decision as it is delivered to the potential paroled. That's active and very positive participation in the parole process.

Yes, lawyers are not allowed in that process. The time for lawyers has passed. The courts have had their time, the judges have had their say. This is a time for victims, and indeed that's what we'll be doing in this act.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to seek unanimous consent to move second reading of An Act to amend The Wilfrid Laurier University Act.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It's very disappointing that the NDP have chosen to play politics with the students at Wilfrid Laurier with regard to this new act.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: What's disappointing is this government's refusal to allow province-wide, wide-based hearings on Bill 45—

**The Speaker:** We're not going to get into that.

We're now going to hear from the government House leader, I believe, on the order for next week.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education, Government House Leader):** Pursuant to standing order 55, I have a statement of business of the House for next week.

Monday afternoon we will continue debate on Bill 56. Monday evening will be second reading of Bill 58.

Tuesday afternoon will be a Liberal opposition day. Tuesday evening we will continue debate on Bill 58.

Wednesday afternoon we will continue debate on Bill 56. Wednesday evening will be determined.

Thursday morning, during private members' business, we will discuss ballot items 11 and 12, and Thursday afternoon we will continue debate on Bill 58.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to express my dissatisfaction with the answer provided today by the Minister of Health and I have filed the appropriate papers with the table.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Chatham-Kent Essex has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Health concerning radiology shortage in Essex, Chatham, Kent and Lambton. This matter will be debated today at 6 pm. I thank the member.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Under section 37(a) of the standing orders, I rise to give notice of dissatisfaction with the answer of the Minister of Natural Resources to the member for Northumberland's question regarding Henrietta. Mrs Anita Young and the people of Wawa are awaiting an answer on Henrietta. I have offered to take her into my custody, and I believe we could debate that at six o'clock this evening.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate that the member will know that he can't be dissatisfied with a question asked by somebody else.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would just like to seek unanimous consent to allow the member to have a late

show with the Minister of Natural Resources on the Henrietta issue.

**The Speaker:** We'll deal with the unanimous consent. Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to point out, because I know he'll feel left out, that the member for Nepean-Carleton has also expressed displeasure with the brevity that I dealt with the blue-spotted salamander. I hope to redress that in a further statement.

#### PETITIONS

#### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I received this petition:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will create two-tier education;

"Whereas the government's plan is to give parents a \$3,500 enticement to pull their kids out of public schools;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will encourage the growth of a segregated society of narrowly focused interests;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will steal money from an already cash-starved public system and deliver public money to special interests who do not have to account for its use;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools effectively create a voucher system in Ontario;

"Whereas the Harris government has no mandate to introduce such a measure,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"We call on the government of Ontario to withdraw its plan for two-tiered education and properly fund public education in Ontario."

I affix my signature.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislature.

"Whereas the announced tax credit for private school tuition will lead to government funds being directed to private education rather than the underfunded public school system that is mandated to educate all children, regardless of cultural, religious or socio-economic status;

"Whereas the education tax credit of up to \$3,500 per child, when fully implemented, will lead to an increase of students being enrolled in private schools to the detriment of the public schools;

"Whereas there will be no accountability for the use of public funds allocated through the education tuition tax credit; and

"Whereas the advocates for religious schools have indicated they will continue to seek full funding for reli-

gious education with the potential result of more public funding being diverted to private schools;

"We, the undersigned, call on the Ontario Legislature to vote to remove the education tuition tax credit from Bill 45, the Ontario 2001 budget legislation."

That's signed by P. Esposito of Welland, by D. Heelis of Fonthill and by thousands of others. I give it to Mark, the legislative page, affixed with my signature.

1530

#### LORD'S PRAYER

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** Just before I start, I'd like to say that I am ending my personal protest against petitions being certified and I will now continue to present them in the House.

This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Lord's prayer, also called Our Father, has been used to open the proceedings of municipal chambers and the Ontario Legislative Assembly since the beginning of Upper Canada in the 18th century; and

"Whereas such use of the Lord's Prayer is part of Ontario's long-standing heritage and a tradition that continues to play a significant role in contemporary life;

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer is a meaningful expression of the religious convictions of many Ontario citizens;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"That the Parliament of Ontario maintain the use of the Lord's Prayer in its proceedings, in accordance with its long-standing established custom, and do all in its power to maintain the use of the prayer in municipal chambers throughout Ontario."

I affix my name to that as I believe in it.

#### NURSES

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the nurses of Ontario are seeking relief from heavy workloads, which have contributed to unsafe conditions for patients and have increased the risk of injury to nurses; and

"Whereas there is a chronic nursing shortage in Ontario;

"Whereas the Ontario government has failed to live up to its commitment to provide safe, high quality care for patients;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We demand the Ontario government take positive action to ensure that our communities have enough nursing staff to provide patients with the care they need. The Ontario government must:

"Ensure wages and benefits are competitive and value all nurses for their dedication and commitment; ensure there are full-time and regular part-time jobs available for nurses in hospitals, nursing homes and the community;

ensure government revenues fund health care, not tax cuts; ensure front-line nurses play a key role in health reform decisions."

Again, I have a number of these petitions, part of the 10,000 names that we have on petitions, and I affix my own name in full agreement with their concerns.

#### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** This petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will create two-tier education;

"Whereas the government's plan to give parents a \$3,500 entitlement to pull their kids out of public schools;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will encourage the growth of a segregated society of narrowly focused interests;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will steal money from an already cash-starved public system and deliver public money to special interests who do not have to account for its use;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools effectively create a voucher system in Ontario;

"Whereas the Harris government has no mandate to introduce such a measure,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We call on the government of Ontario to withdraw its plan for two-tiered education and properly fund public education in Ontario."

These petitions have been signed by thousands of people across the province and I affix my signature to it.

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** I've got a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, a very important petition I might say. I'm getting hundreds and hundreds of signatures on this.

"Whereas wide parental and student choice are essential to the best possible education for all students; and

"Whereas many people believe that an education with a strong faith component, be it Christian, Sikh"—especially Sikh—"Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or another religion, is best for their children; and

"Whereas many people believe that special education methodologies such as those practised in the Montessori and Waldorf schools are best for their children; and

"Whereas over 100,000 students are currently enrolled in the independent schools of Ontario; and

"Whereas the parents of these students continue to support the public education system through their tax dollars; and

"Whereas an effective way to enhance the education of those students is to allow an education tax credit for a portion of the tuition fees paid for that education;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass the budget bill giving tax credits to parents of children who attend independent schools as soon as possible."

Since I agree, I'm happy to sign my name to it.

### WATER EXTRACTION

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the residents and cottagers of Bob's Lake, strenuously object to the permit issued by the Ministry of the Environment to OMYA Inc to remove 1.5 million litres of water per day from the Tay River, without adequate assessment of the consequences and without adequate consultation with the public and those people and groups who have expertise and interest; and

"Whereas it is our belief that this water-taking will drastically impact the environment and seriously affect the water levels in Bob's Lake and Christie Lake;

"Whereas Bob's Lake and the Tay River watershed are already highly stressed by the historic responsibility of Parks Canada to use Bob's Lake as a reservoir for the Rideau Canal; and

"Whereas the movement of water from the lake through the watershed for navigation purposes in the canal provides sufficient stress and problems for the lake. This water-taking permit will only compound the stresses on the waterway;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We request that this permit be rescinded until a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of water-taking by OMYA Inc on the environment, the water levels and the water needs of these communities is complete. An independent non-partisan body should undertake this evaluation."

I will affix my signature to this petition.

### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I've got another petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will create two-tier education;

"Whereas the government plans to give parents a \$3,500 enticement to pull their kids out of public schools;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will encourage the growth of a segregated society of"—narrowly focused—"interests;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will steal money from an already cash-starved public system" and deliver public money to special interests who do not have to account for its use;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools effectively create a voucher system in Ontario;

"Whereas the Harris government has no mandate to introduce such a measure;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We call on the government of Ontario to withdraw its plan for two-tiered education and properly fund public education in Ontario."

That's signed by Stephanie Repar of Fonthill, Michael Petrachenko of Welland and thousands of others across Niagara region.

### ELECTRICITY GENERATING STATION

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I appreciate the opportunity to present a petition to the Parliament of Ontario on behalf of the member for Oakville, Gary Carr, and myself as the member for Mississauga South. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas Sithe Energies Canadian Development Ltd is actively pursuing the development of an 800 MW electricity generating facility;

"Whereas the 14-hectare parcel of land on which the station is proposed is located on the east side of Winston Churchill Boulevard in the Southdown industrial district of Mississauga;

"Whereas Sithe has stated its commitment to an open dialogue with communities where it has a presence and to being responsive to the concerns of the same; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has a responsibility to ensure the safety of Ontario citizens and to determine how this facility will impact those who live in its immediate, surrounding area;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario direct the Ministry of the Environment to undertake a formal environmental assessment of the Sithe project."

We are now up to over 8,000 names in this petition, and it is with a great deal of pleasure that I sign the petition in support.

1540

### SALE OF SCHOOLS

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario which reads as follows:

"Whereas the Hughes Public School at 17 Innes Ave in the city of Toronto closed down and its premises have been declared surplus by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB);

"Whereas the city of Toronto has issued a building permit to the TDSB permitting the reconstruction of Hughes Public School for an entity called Beatrice House, for the purpose of a private academic school;

"Whereas the Beatrice House is not a private school"—at least it's not registered with the Ministry of Education, nor has it been issued as an organization.

"Whereas other locations, such as the Brother Edmund Rice School at 55 Pelham Park or the EarlsCourt Public

School at 29 Ascot, which are being closed down, have been offered to Beatrice House to no avail;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the Honourable Minister of Education investigate the leasing arrangement between the Toronto District School Board and Beatrice House inasmuch as:

"(1) Boards are to seek fair market value when selling ...

"(2) Boards are to offer the property to coterminous boards and other public agencies operating in the area ...

"(3) Toronto District School Board has not dealt in good faith with our neighbourhood residents;

"Therefore, we respectfully ask you to consider our plea for justice. The Toronto District School Board has ignored our concerns and due diligence. We as a community tried everything within our power to fight the glaring and obvious wrong done to us, to no avail."

Since I agree, I sign my name to it.

#### EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I've got a petition once again addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads:

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will create two-tier education;

"Whereas the government's plan is to give parents a \$3,500 incentive to pull their kids out of public schools;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will encourage the growth of a segregated society of narrowly focused interests;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools will steal money from an already cash-starved public system and deliver public money to special interests who do not have to account for its use;

"Whereas tax credits for private schools effectively create a voucher system in Ontario;

"Whereas the Harris government has no mandate to introduce such a measure;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We call on the government of Ontario to withdraw its plan for two-tiered education and properly fund public education in Ontario."

That's signed by Mike Hunter of St Catharines, by Gary MacDonald of Thorold and by thousands of others from across Niagara region.

#### PROTECTION OF MINORS

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows—

*Applause.*

**Ms Mushinski:** Thank you, member for Mississauga South.

"Whereas children are being exposed to sexually explicit materials in many commercial establishments; and

"Whereas many municipalities do not have bylaws in place to protect minors and those that do vary from place to place and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials; and

"Whereas uniform standards are needed in Ontario that would make it illegal to sell, rent, loan or display sexually explicit materials to minors;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To pass Bill 95, Protection of Minors from Sexually Explicit Goods and Services Act, 2000, as soon as possible."

I'm pleased to attach my signature to this petition.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### BROWNFIELDS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2001

##### LOI DE 2001 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES FRICHES CONTAMINÉES

Mr Hodgson moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 56, An Act to encourage the revitalization of contaminated land and to make other amendments relating to environmental matters / Projet de loi 56, Loi visant à encourager la revitalisation des terrains contaminés et apportant d'autres modifications se rapportant à des questions environnementales.

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I will be sharing my time with the member for Durham, the Minister of Transportation and the member for Simcoe North.

It's my great pleasure today to rise in the House and speak to an important piece of legislation that is intended to foster clean, healthy and dynamic communities in this province by encouraging the environmental cleanup and revitalization of lands known as brownfields.

The Brownfields Statute Law Amendment Act is a key element in this government's encompassing commitment to reasoned, thoughtful growth and development in Ontario. This legislation is a kick-start for the environmental cleanup and renewal of brownfields: former industrial or commercial sites that can be found in virtually every community throughout Ontario.

I know that many members of this House share this government's conviction that the revitalization of the province's brownfields is vital to the future development of our communities. We've conducted consultations on this issue, we've had a working group look at this issue, and the time is right to have debate on this legislation, not just from the parties in the House but from members of the public as well. I'm particularly interested in hearing from people who would take on the challenge of revitalizing these brownfields sites. I welcome their review of this legislation and encourage their feedback. This is a

very important piece of legislation and I want to make sure that it works and does what it intends to do.

As members are aware, brownfields are usually located in urban cores, close to municipal services like transportation, sewers and water, and as such, brownfield sites represent an enormous untapped resource. Facilitating their development encourages efficient and effective use of existing municipal infrastructure, services and resources.

Brownfields exist in many communities throughout Ontario, often on lands that were previously home to chemical plants, dry cleaning stores, gas stations, railway yards or factories. These properties are usually located close to existing urban services and community transportation. Because of that, brownfields offer tremendous environmental, economic, social and fiscal benefits for the communities that choose to redevelop them.

As they are cleaned and redeveloped and as people once again choose to live and work to re-energize the area, there can be enormous social and economic gains to the whole community. Cleaning up and redeveloping brownfields can also help preserve our vital green spaces and farmland for all the people of this province.

I believe the most exciting aspect of cleaning up these contaminated lands is not just so that it will benefit communities today, but that it will be of enormous benefit for generations to come. By bringing these old industrial and commercial sites back to life, communities have a unique opportunity to improve their quality of life and protect the environment, to attract new business and new development and jobs.

To date, as I mentioned, we have conducted consultations. We have consulted with experts across Ontario during the past two years. We put together a panel of brownfield experts who worked with my ministry and with the Ministry of the Environment to prepare legislation that would encourage the revitalization of brownfields. The brownfields advisory panel chair, Blake Hutcheson, president of CB Richard Ellis Ltd in Canada, says this legislation supports the recommendations of the panel. If I may quote Blake, he says, "We believe this legislation will be good for Ontario, as it is both well thought out and balanced."

Today we have an opportunity to debate this progressive, forward-thinking legislation that will benefit all of Ontario's communities. I would encourage the public to take this opportunity to provide feedback as well. The intent of this legislation is to assist brownfield redevelopment in several key areas; to set out clear rules for cleanup of contaminated brownfield sites; to ensure that environmental standards are met and public health protected; to provide liability protection from future environmental orders from municipalities, lenders, owners and developers involved with brownfield properties; and to streamline planning processes to expedite brownfield projects and to help municipalities provide financial support for cleanup costs.

Cleaning up brownfields improves our soil and water quality and protects human health. By encouraging re-

development of brownfields, the legislation fosters clean, healthy, dynamic neighbourhoods and communities that all Ontarians want and deserve. Brownfields redevelopment supports more efficient use of existing infrastructure in services like sewers and public transportation, relieving pressure to expand on farmland or on greenfield sites. However, the tremendous benefits that brownfields offer are not being realized today because it can be difficult to clean up and redevelop these sites under the current legislative framework.

The proposed legislation and subsequent regulations will set out an environmentally responsible approach for cleaning up brownfields, while maintaining the Ministry of the Environment's powers to issue orders to address an environmental emergency or to take strong action against polluters.

1550

The purpose of the Brownfields Statute Law Amendment Act is to provide clarity and certainty for those involved in brownfields redevelopment: municipalities, developers, lenders and environmentalists. It addresses a number of specific issues now faced by those who wish to bring these lands back to life.

For example, the act is intended to provide:

Clear rules for cleanup through mandatory site assessment and cleanup, if required, of industrial and commercial sites being redeveloped into sensitive land uses such as residential and parkland, giving standards for contaminated levels in the soil and the groundwater the force of law and prescribing how a site assessment and cleanup is to be carried out;

Clear rules for environmental liability by providing protection from future environmental orders: for example, for a municipality from taking action for purposes of tax sales or actions related to other municipal responsibilities; secured creditors when taking actions to protect the interests in a property; persons conducting environmental investigations while acquiring interest in a property; and owners who follow the prescribed site assessment and cleanup process, including using a certified site cleanup professional and a mandatory reporting to the public site registry;

Ensuring quality cleanup and accountability through signoff by certified professionals, mandatory certification of site cleanup professionals and mandatory reporting of site assessment and cleanup through a public registry.

There may be some who question the need for this legislation. After all, brownfield redevelopment is occurring in some municipalities throughout Ontario today and my ministry is front and centre in highlighting these pioneering efforts through the ministry's brownfields showcase. But at the present, the process is very complex, difficult and frustrating. I believe we are missing an incredible opportunity to develop our communities. Without legislation of this kind, we will undoubtedly miss countless more opportunities.

Developers, municipalities and investors have all let us know that there are concerns with the process as it stands today. They have told us of the need for reform in

the legislation if we are going to make environmental and economic progress with these sites.

The Brownfields Statute Law Amendment Act is designed to remove the key obstacles to cleaning up and recycling these valuable lands. It will help us sponsor the clean, vibrant, dynamic neighbourhoods and communities that all Ontarians want. It will help us preserve our green spaces and our farmlands. It will help communities make more efficient use of existing infrastructure.

Communities will be able to make this work if it's passed by the Legislature. In essence, it will help communities grow more wisely and efficiently. The proposed legislation is good for the environment and it's good for human health. It calls for well-managed growth and it encourages local economic development and revitalizes our communities.

If enacted, the final legislation will form an important part of our government's overall Smart Growth initiative. As honourable members know, Ontario's Smart Growth vision is about managing our continued economic growth in a way that makes sure we have a healthy environment and a good quality of life. It's about giving people choices no matter where they live in Ontario and ensuring we have an infrastructure that will allow for those choices. Smart Growth is about encouraging sound community development. Cleaning up and reusing brownfields will help us create the conditions for continued growth that benefits our environment, our economy and our communities.

As members are aware, the Premier asked myself and my parliamentary assistant, Morley Kells, to lead a government-wide exercise in developing a made-in-Ontario Smart Growth strategy. We are consulting with people throughout the province. We are holding 17 regional consultation sessions as well as encouraging people to communicate their ideas on how we can have strong growth, healthy communities and a strong, healthy environment through newspaper ads that give the address of how to respond. We have a Web site as well. We're looking forward to hearing ideas from people right across Ontario on how to develop a made-in-Ontario Smart Growth strategy.

This brownfields legislation we're proposing today is a key component of our vision. I would encourage all members to take part in this debate, and I would encourage you to suggest improvements. I think it's in the interests of the government and in the interests of all the members of this House that this legislation is well done and does what it intends to do, to allow these areas that are contaminated in our downtown areas throughout Ontario to be revitalized, brought back into productive use, and to encourage less use of our green space.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Further debate?

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** It's my pleasure to follow the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who I know has been and is leading a kind of visioning exercise, or is certainly leading the way in a visionary way to smart growth for sustainable communities across Ontario. In my briefings on Bill 56, I can tell you as a

former municipal councillor in the town of Bowmanville, the municipality of Clarington and the region of Durham, from time to time old gas station sites were particularly a problem. They ended up in many cases being abandoned, and yet these were serviced sites, usually with commercial designation, but no one wanted to assume any part of the liability. In fact, if you look at the waterfront in Toronto or in many communities like Hamilton or indeed Oshawa, I think every community has these sites. These sites are under-utilized economic losses or liabilities.

There are actually quite a few sections in the bill, but I think there are really eight particular sections. I'm going to dwell on just a couple of them under Bill 56 and make a couple of comments with suggestions I've heard in the community as well. I think it's important to put on the record that this comes under part II under the Environmental Protection Act amendments. For anyone listening or for those in the debate, it's important to realize that in no way does this exempt people from a very rigorous environmental oversight, while at the same time permitting both landowners and indeed municipalities to make the right decisions to make proper use of what our minister has called Smart Growth opportunities to make better use of current serviced land in many cases.

I just want to put on the record that I've spoken with and listened to the editor of the Orono Times, Marg Zwart. I believe she is the owner/editor of the Orono Times and has made significant inquiries with the York Durham Ministry of the Environment office with respect to the rehabilitation of an old gas station location in the village of Orono. I would say she is quite frustrated with how this really gets resolved, because in many cases what happens is that the current owner of record is unable to sell it because there are potential risks or liabilities, the banks won't advance money because they don't have an assessment on ways to rehabilitate the property or, in fact, it may have potentially leached to the adjacent property. So there are a lot of unknowns. Not only that, but a lot of money has to be spent to make those determinations.

So I commend Marg and others. In fact, I'm familiar with, from being on council, several sites that spent hundreds of thousands in litigation to find out where the contamination may have come from. It could have come from an adjacent gas station or other site. In most cases, industrial sites from many years past, abandoned, are owned by the public, technically, in default of taxes.

But getting back to the particulars of Bill 56, it's important to put on the record that part II of the bill amends the Environmental Protection Act and adds two new parts to the act. "The proposed part XV.1 of the act provides the establishment of an environmental site registry. It's very important that first we have a good inventory of those sites. Phase one environmental assessments are done on the site. It's required to determine the likelihood that contaminants have affected the property. "A more detailed assessment (referred to as a 'phase two environmental site assessment') may be required to determine the concentration of contaminants on the property.

If a phase two environmental site assessment is conducted in respect of any part of the property, a qualified person must certify in the record of site condition that the assessed property meets standards prescribed by regulation or that, in the case of specific contaminants, the assessed property meets standards specified in the risk assessment that has been accepted by the director. If the director accepts a risk assessment, he or she may also issue a certificate of property use that requires the owner to take actions specified in the certificate or to refrain from using the property for a use specified in the certificate or from constructing a building specified in the certificate."

**1600**

So it outlines the site uses, really. "If a record of site condition is filed in the environmental site registry, the bill provides that certain types of orders specified by the bill cannot be made against the owner of the property and certain other persons, subject to specified exceptions." That's a very important part with exposing yourself to the liability once you've done these phase one and phase two site assessments.

The proposed part XV.1 also prohibits certain specific changes of property use. For example, you can't change a site from industrial use to residential use "unless a record of site condition has been filed in the environmental site registry" and, of course, has met certain conditions. No one would want to see residential property or homes built on a prior contaminated industrial site.

"The proposed part XV.2 of the act contains special provisions that apply to municipalities, secured creditors, receivers, trustees in bankruptcy, fiduciaries and property investigators. These provisions provide protection to those persons from the making of orders under the act, subject to limitations and exceptions" specific in the act. In other words, third party people cannot be made liable because they're involved in underwriting some of the expenses.

But part VII of the Planning Act—and I think this is very important—is the second part that I wanted to spend some time on. "Part VII of the bill amends the Planning Act. The amendments provide that municipalities may make grants or loans to tenants, as well as property owners" and could be exempted from taxes or something like that, "for the purpose of carrying out community improvement plans." For instance, in downtown Bowmanville on King Street, there has been an abandoned gas station there right in the heart of town. It's prime property, but it's a gas station and nobody wants to develop it. It has just gone from owner to owner, and site application has failed one after another. But it's a very valuable commercial piece in a small town, and it's a service piece. It could be argued that if that site isn't used, that proposed building goes somewhere else, and eventually it encroaches on agricultural land or land that isn't serviced. It puts another burden on the community to expend or extend services. So this is an important opportunity for municipalities, and the tax assistance provided to the property under the amendment made to

the Municipal Act by part III of the bill cannot exceed the cost of the rehabilitation of the property.

In other words, what happens if they rehabilitate the property and it goes back into active use is that it's reassessed as a current active commercial or industrial site and in fact goes back into production and then creates revenue by being assessed at current value and being assessed at current use and raises revenue for the municipality which in fact isn't currently being collected because it's abandoned and in tax arrears.

I think those are very good amendments. But I want to mention a couple of things that aren't particularly germane here, I suppose. I was at a presentation the other day by the cement caucus. Wayne Dawson represents the cement industry, which in my riding is an important employer of 200 or 300 people. They brought forward a very innovative way to rehabilitate brownfield sites that many jurisdictions are using in certain applications. It's called cement stabilization. Cleaning up and reusing of brownfield sites benefits our environment, our economy and our communities and arguably the quality of life, as well as improving the municipal assessment base. By making it easier to take advantage of brownfield opportunities, this legislation will make more effective use of existing infrastructure and preserve our parks and farmland, our natural and heritage landscapes.

So I think it's a very, very important initiative, one that I certainly support. I encourage all members on the other side—who I know are equally interested in rehabilitating current use. I think the best example perhaps would be the Toronto waterfront properties, potentially a site of future development—arguably, it could be the Olympics. The proposed brownfield legislation will incorporate many recommendations made by a panel of brownfield experts appointed by the province in September of the year 2000. Furthermore, a brief summary of other jurisdictions demonstrates the currency of addressing the public policy issue of brownfield redevelopment. In fact, it is a growing area of expertise, and I think that knowledge and that knowledge base will make better use of existing sites that are now completely dormant or deserted.

The May 10 edition of the Economist reports that the British Tory government in 1996 introduced the rule of sequential testing in planning laws. Developers now have to prove there is no suitable location inside a town or city before they can hope to get planning permission on a greenfield site. What that means is that urban crawl, urban sprawl, urban expansion—there are some very good principles, as we can see in other jurisdictions.

The change in the rule is designed to promote similar principles as laid out in our government's Smart Growth strategy. On the record, I want to commend the Honourable Chris Hodgson, the member from Haliburton-Victoria-Brock. I was at the first Smart Growth symposium, which was held in Peterborough. The member from Peterborough, Gary Stewart, of course was there, along with the member from Northumberland, Doug Galt. But I think most importantly there were

members from I think it's the Kawartha Lakes Conservation Authority, the president and/or members of the Trent University staff—a very well respected environmental academic institution—and as well Sir Sandford Fleming College was represented. They've done a number of imaginative and innovative things with respect to environmental sustainability, with a lot of good programs and courses in Peterborough, at Trent and Sandford on that issue, which all fit very nicely into the whole Smart Growth principle.

I want to report, though, that at that meeting there were Mayor Sylvia Sutherland and other municipal leaders, and not just chambers of commerce but ordinary citizens, and I would say business people, developers, whom we have to recognize we have to coexist with. We have to somehow have a sustainable economy. We must provide safe, high quality of life communities where the environment is highly respected. This is a problem whereby, working together rather than just ignoring these things, we can have more sustainable communities.

The National Deal Flow Conference recently took place in Chicago. This trade show brings together all parties in the US with a professional interest in cleaning up and redeveloping America's environmentally impaired properties, or brownfields, and here is evidence that the market is interested in cleaning up brownfields. So the will is there, I think at all levels of government right through to the conservation authorities, to do the right thing.

That material is not going to get any better or improve. Arguably it could be leached from the property if it isn't dealt with sooner or later. US states, in co-operation with the Environmental Protection Agency, are developing brownfield redevelopment programs. In fact, 47 states now have voluntary cleanup programs in place. More than 20 states offer financial incentives to firms that undertake brownfield redevelopment. Pennsylvania is a leader in this important policy domain and will clean up its 1,000th brownfield site this summer.

The technology for cleaning up industrial contaminated brownfields has improved steadily and substantially. As members know, along with others, I have successfully developed a relationship, through the creation of a non-partisan cement caucus, with Wayne Dawson, who is vice-president, Ontario region, Cement Association of Canada. I might mention that members of the Liberal caucus as well as the NDP caucus who have cement operators in their areas are willing members of this association of MPPs who are trying to work with their community and existing government ministries, to do the right thing.

Our goal has been to advance the public policy discourse around the economic and environmental benefits associated with the cement industry. Cement presents some important options for brownfield redevelopment in the future. In the few remaining moments I have left, I'm just going to talk about that.

As I start this potential application, the cement operation that was St Marys became Blue Circle, then became

Lafarge, and I think just recently devolved because of competitive models into I think a Brazilian company. That's 300 jobs. It's a resource that's located in my riding on the shores of Lake Ontario in Bowmanville and it's an important employer for my constituents.

It's out of respect for that group—I'm sure whether it's Mississauga South, Margaret Marland's riding, and Mr Sampson as well, the minister there, I think, has a cement operation in his riding in Mississauga.

#### 1610

In early May, the Cement Association of Canada hosted a site remediation workshop. Cement caucus members of all three political parties were invited and did attend. The workshop provided a forum for discussion of cement-based solidification and stabilization treatment technology for environmental remediation. At the May meeting of the cement caucus, we were privileged to hear a presentation by Charles Wilk, program manager for waste management at the US Portland Cement Association.

Solidification/stabilization treatment—S/S is the acronym—is used to treat industrial waste for disposal and in the remediation and site restoration of contaminated land. Solidification/stabilization is a popular technology in brownfield redevelopment since treated waste can often be left on-site, for instance, as a parking lot, to actually improve the site soils for subsequent construction of parking garages or other spaces where it's an appropriate use. That's where the scientist and the evidence work together.

Solidification/stabilization treatment involves mixing a blended agent into the contaminated waste. Successful treatment is accomplished through physical changes to the waste form and often chemical changes to the hazardous contaminants themselves. A commonly used S/S binding agent happens to be Portland cement. In the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency considers solidification/stabilization to be an established treatment technology. The EPA has identified S/S cement stabilization treatment as the best demonstrated available treatment technology for at least 57 commonly produced industrial wastes and has selected S/S treatment for 25% of the Superfund—this is their version of a program for remediation projects. It's sort of like a fund of money the federal government has set up to get rid of all these brownfield sites that, after years of neglect, are still there.

The extensive use of S/S in waste treatment and remediation makes it important that environmental professionals understand the physical and chemical principles of the technology, as well as how to apply the technology in the field.

Mr Tom Markowitz and Mr Robert Bruce represented the Ontario Ministry of the Environment at the workshop. I'm looking forward to meeting with them in the near future to further explore the use of solidification/stabilization treatment technology for environmental remediation of brownfields right here in Ontario and the applicable regulatory requirements, as outlined in Bill 56, and resources available to properly implement cement

stabilization as an effective treatment technology on contaminated sites.

Experience demonstrates that S/S is an effective tool in brownfield site remediation. Projects have included shopping malls, golf courses, auto-marine terminals, waterfronts. The advantages clearly demonstrate that there is value in adapting this type of approach to Ontario's legal, regulatory and real estate development environment, all in conformance with the Environmental Protection Act.

This government is acting to ensure that appropriate legislated mechanisms and safeguards are in place to ensure quality cleanup and containment of brownfields is a dominant part of the solution. The work of this government, through the leadership of Minister Hodgson, will provide a practical and environmentally sound approach to brownfield redevelopment that will ensure Ontario has cleaner, healthier and safer communities. Our strategy will provide clear rules for the assessment and cleanup of contaminated sites, clear rules for environmental liability, clear rules for quality assurance mechanisms, planning tools and financial tools.

The Brownfields Statute Amendment Act, but one aspect of the Progressive Conservative government's Smart Growth strategy, will result in the integration of land use and transportation, management of growth at an extra-regional scale, development and redevelopment of urban centres themselves. As our population expands, we've got to use less land, or at least existing serviced land more effectively, while protecting and conserving our natural environment, ecological functions and indeed promoting public transit.

The brownfields legislation is part of Ontario's Smart Growth strategy, as I've said before, promoting and managing growth in ways that sustain a strong economy, building strong communities and, most importantly for us and our families, promoting a healthy environment and healthy communities. This government is providing the framework for difficult but necessary decisions that will ensure we foster development and growth to keep Ontario strong, growing and ready for the 21st century.

Part of this framework is the Brownfields Statute Law Amendment Act. The legislation makes it easier to clean up and develop derelict brownfield sites, which will take pressure off greenfields and prime agricultural land, like in my riding of Durham.

I know there are others who are absolutely prancing to participate in this debate and, with that, I'm going to relinquish some of my time to, I believe, the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford or Simcoe North. Mr Speaker, thank you for the time to participate on Bill 56.

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon and speak to Bill 56, the Brownfields Statute Law Amendment Act. I'd like to thank the member for Durham, Mr O'Toole, for his comments. I'd also like to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Minister Hodgson, for putting forth this bill.

As most members know, brownfields are sites on which industrial or commercial activity took place in the past but are currently abandoned. These properties may or may not be contaminated. I think pretty well everyone in this House has driven by many of these sites across our province over the years. Quite often you see them not only in and around the cities but you see them in small towns. Some of our older factories that are no longer in operation are actually, in my opinion, fairly sad sights to see.

They're often located in prime locations where infrastructure and other urban services already exist. That's an important part in itself for this act because this act will allow the removal of those contaminated soils, to take advantage of that very expensive infrastructure that exists today.

Last September, the former Minister of Municipal Affairs, Mr Clement, announced the appointment of an advisory panel to provide expert advice on the environmental cleanup and rejuvenation of brownfields. The result of these consultations is the Brownfields Statute Law Amendment Act. If passed, it would encourage the environmental cleanup and revitalization of these lands.

It is interesting to note that the Harris government was the first to introduce a process and a set of environmental standards for site cleanup here in Ontario. The proposed brownfields legislation, and regulations that follow it, would give these standards the force of law and set out a process for cleaning up brownfields.

The minister has found that one of the prime barriers to widespread brownfield redevelopment is current concern over environmental liability. I think pretty well everyone is aware of that as well, when we talk about where old gas stations and service stations were located, where gas and oil were spilled in the past. Many people—insurance companies, environmentalists—are very concerned about those sites. In a lot of cases, municipalities wouldn't even want to take on the responsibility, even if people hadn't paid their taxes on those particular sites. Despite the tremendous benefits to be gained from redeveloping brownfields, financial institutions and developers are often reluctant to invest in these sites. The caution stems from concerns over potential liability for future environmental problems and the financial implications of this liability.

The proposed legislation sets out clear rules for limiting future environmental liability, complemented by checks and balances to ensure that environmental standards are met and that the people of Ontario are protected.

The proposed changes do not alter the Ministry of the Environment's powers to issue orders to address environmental emergencies or to take strong action against polluters. The ministry will continue to audit site cleanups.

Cleaning up brownfield sites has tremendous environmental benefits. It improves our soil and water quality and protects human health. The legislation, if passed by this House—and I certainly hope it will be passed—

would also remove the key obstacles to cleaning up and recycling brownfield materials.

By making it easier to take advantage of brownfield opportunities, this legislation will make more efficient use of existing infrastructure and preserve our parks and farmlands for the future. That's important too. If we can redevelop these lands, we can think of less farmland that will be used down the road in the future; there will be less of a concern about very sensitive areas like wetlands and that type of thing.

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Redeveloping brownfields will help meet the needs of our growing economy while protecting our natural and heritage landscapes. By making brownfields redevelopment easier, the proposed legislation will enable communities to improve their quality of life, be more competitive, and attract new businesses and jobs. Of course, those are the jobs that we continually refer to in all of our deliberations and all of our legislation: jobs for the future, jobs for the young people of our province.

This bill is an important step in the implementation of our Smart Growth program. As mentioned before, Smart Growth deals with growth in ways that sustain a strong economy, build strong communities and promote a healthy environment. It involves making decisions now on such things as protected spaces and public transit, decisions that will influence what Ontario looks like not only now, but 10 years, 20 years and even 30 years from now.

"Smart Growth" is a term that's been used by this government for the last few months. Smart Growth has become a high priority for our government. When we released our 2001 budget, the government said it would focus half of the \$1-billion SuperBuild millennium partnership fund on transportation and environmental initiatives.

Some of the goals of Smart Growth are, first, to move people and goods more efficiently, and it's important that we have a great transportation system in our province; second, to promote technological innovations to keep Ontario competitive in the global economy; third, to expand transportation choices within and between communities and between residential areas and places of work. I know that's really a concern that we have in our area in the Simcoe county region, because we have literally thousands and thousands of people—I think up to 30,000 people per day—who travel between the Barrie area and the south Simcoe area and the GTA. That's putting a tremendous burden on our transportation system. We would certainly like to see growth patterns where more industry or more jobs were up in the central part of the county so we wouldn't have this huge number of people commuting each day between the Barrie area and the city of Toronto.

We would also protect natural areas and farmland for future generations. I don't think there's anybody in this province now who doesn't agree that we have to do more to protect our environment, our very sensitive areas, our ANSI areas. This is for our future, our children, and I

think it's fairly unanimous across the province that we want this saved.

It would also encourage growth in areas where it will have the least impact on the environment and it will promote partnerships to execute the goals of this strategy.

Ontario Smart Growth also involves giving people lifestyle choice no matter where they live. It's a long-term, forward-looking strategy that requires input from the people of Ontario. To that end, the government is holding consultations with municipal leaders and business leaders, environmentalists and other community representatives in regions across our province. I am pleased that June 5—next Tuesday, I believe it is—the team will be visiting the Barrie area. I've already notified a few of the municipal leaders and some of the environmental groups in my area that they should attend this meeting and get some input into some of the Smart Growth policies.

I'm also pleased that Smart Growth fits in very well with the Oak Ridges moraine legislation and the brownfields legislation. They all sort of meld together, they're sort of intertwined, because we need to be very careful of the sensitivity of most of the areas around our province that are highly sensitive.

I have one of those areas in my riding: the Oro moraine. It's just as important to the residents of Oro-Medonte township as the Oak Ridges moraine is to the people who live in that particular moraine area. Although it is not quite as large, the Oro moraine does supply huge volumes of water to the city of Barrie and to developments throughout Oro-Medonte township. But there is a strong concern from the residents of that area that they want development carefully monitored and they want to look at the future of the moraine very carefully.

For that reason, I had the opportunity last March to host an event we held at a water symposium that is similar to consultations that are being held across our province. I was able to bring in a number of speakers to talk, experts on water quality, on groundwater monitoring, people from conservation authorities. I held this at the Oro-Medonte community centre.

I invited experts such as Ms Kerry Green, who is a project coordinator for the Oro Moraine Habitat Project. It is a two-year initiative undertaken by the Couchiching Conservancy, an environmental group that's a land stewardship group out of the city of Orillia. I also had Ms Vicki Barron, who is the manager of the Credit River Conservation Authority, and Mr Brian Beatty, a water resources engineer, who specializes specifically in groundwater.

Each one of these individuals spoke on a different topic. They weren't all coming from the same direction, but they were all concerned about water quality. They talked about how we could develop more projects in the area and at the same time carefully monitor the groundwater supply in the area. It is interesting to note that Mr Beatty started his career with the Ontario Water Resources Commission, now the Ministry of the Environment, in 1964.

At this water symposium that was held in Oro-Medonte township, over 200 people from my constituency showed up for an informed discussion on the future development of the Oro moraine. It is a highly sensitive environmental area, as I said earlier. It was an excellent opportunity for members of my communities to hear from the experts in this field of environmental concern. I think I'll plan on holding more of those events in the future, because it brings an emphasis to the environment and it gets a lot of people talking about something that they're very concerned about.

I look forward to continuing the conversation with the people of Simcoe North about the future development of our communities and of our province through contacting my offices in Orillia and Midland and through the Smart Growth initiatives that people will hear next and over the next few weeks with Mr Kells and his group who are going around to meet different municipalities.

I can assure this House that I will continue to listen to the concerns of the people of Simcoe North on this Oro moraine issue and that our government will continue to develop new ways to protect our environment. There are people, even as I speak—I've got letters on file—who would like to see a moratorium put on the development of the Oro moraine. If passed by this House, the brownfields legislation will be an important step to protect our lands and curb urban sprawl across our province.

I know we've got about 16 minutes left, and I wanted to allow the Minister of Transportation to speak on this very sensitive area. I appreciate the opportunity to speak here this afternoon.

**Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Transportation):** It is a great opportunity to be here and speak to this particular bill. It is also a great opportunity to see you in the chair, because that's one less skilled heckler I'll have to deal with today.

As we move into the 21st century, redevelopment of brownfield sites will be a key component in urban renewal and the growth of our urban centres. Brownfields are sites on which industrial or commercial activity took place in the past but are currently abandoned or under-used. These properties are often located in prime locations where infrastructure has grown around them and there already exist urban services. In addition, they may or may not have been contaminated after years of industrial or commercial activity.

The redevelopment of these brownfields will enable more economic activity to flourish in urban centres, leading to a renaissance in many of Ontario's cities. This government's brownfield strategy is to provide a practical and environmentally sound approach to brownfield development. This will help municipal governments build cleaner, healthier communities. This government was the first to introduce the process and a set of environmental standards for site cleanup in Ontario.

The proposed brownfields legislation and regulations would give these standards the force of law and set out a process for cleaning up brownfields. The proposed legislation and regulations allow for the cleanup of brown-

fields with a keen eye to upholding the stronger environmental standards. I am proud this government put this in place. It also maintains that the Ministry of the Environment's ability to address significant contamination in industrial and commercial sites is retained.

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It should go without saying that the cleaning up of brownfields has tremendous environmental benefits. Not only does it clean up urban centres, but it improves our soil and water quality, leading to a better quality of life for urban residents. This legislation is a part of our government's made-in-Ontario Smart Growth strategy. The strategy is to ensure that the Ontario we build today will effectively serve the growth and the needs of Ontario of the future. It links economic growth to using existing infrastructure in a way that makes sure we have a healthy environment, a high quality of life.

The cleanup of brownfields is one method we can use to benefit the economy, the environment and our communities. It encourages smarter patterns of urban growth by cleaning and recycling existing lands. That's what the made-in-Ontario Smart Growth strategy is all about.

This legislation makes it easier to take advantage of brownfield opportunities. Thus, municipalities will be able to make more efficient use of the existing infrastructure, preserve our parks and our farmlands. By recycling brownfields, municipalities will be able to protect the green spaces and our natural and heritage landscapes.

Something I'd like to draw to the members' attention in this legislation is environmental liability. This is seen as one of the prime, in many cases the only, barrier to brownfield redevelopment, and it is addressed fully in this bill. Despite the tremendous benefits to be gained from developing brownfields, financial institutions and developers are often reluctant to invest in these sites. Their caution stems from the very real concern over potential liability for future environmental problems and the financial implications of that liability. This proposed legislation sets out clear rules for limiting future environmental liability, complemented by checks and balances, to ensure that environmental standards are met and that the people of Ontario are protected.

The proposed changes do not alter the Ministry of the Environment's powers to issue orders, to address environmental emergencies or to take strong action against polluters. The ministry will continue to audit site cleanups and there will be clear, concise, articulate rules put in place to govern cleanups.

The proposed legislation would require mandatory environmental site assessment and cleanup, if required, to prescribed standards where there is a land use change from industrial-commercial to residential-parkland or to other land use changes prescribed by regulations. It would also provide clear rules for site assessment, cleanup and standards for contaminants based on proposed land use. It would also require the acceptance of a site-specific risk assessment by the Ministry of the Environment and allow for conditions to be placed on the use of the property.

Going back to the matter of environmental liability, this legislation establishes clear rules. The proposed legislation would provide liability protection from future environmental orders from municipalities if taking actions for the purpose of a tax sale or actions related to other municipal responsibilities. It would provide liability protection from future environmental orders for secured creditors, while protecting interest in a property.

It would provide liability protection for a fiduciary in their own personal capacity. It would provide protection from environmental orders for any person conducting an environmental investigation while acquiring interest in a property. It would also provide liability protection from future environmental orders for owners who follow the prescribed site assessment and cleanup process, which includes filing a record of a site condition to that site registry and using a certified site cleanup professional.

This legislation would maintain the ministry's power to issue an environmental order in response to an environmental emergency. It introduces a number of quality assurance measurements, which include sign-off by certified professionals, mandatory reporting to a site registry and an auditing process to ensure compliance with the legislation and regulations.

To summarize, I feel safe that this legislation goes a long way to establish clear and strict rules for environmental liability and cleanup of brownfield sites.

This legislation is a big win for municipalities across the province of Ontario, and nowhere more so than in my own community, the city of Hamilton. In September 2000, this government appointed a panel of experts to examine brownfield issues and make recommendations, many of which have become incorporated in this bill.

The new city of Hamilton is one of Ontario's oldest and most developed industrial cities, featuring a significant amount of brownfields, especially throughout the older sections of town. The redevelopment of brownfields will be crucial to the city's future, and that's why the city appreciated the opportunity to provide input to the brownfields advisory panel.

I can also advise the House that this bill has been very well received in Hamilton. Mayor Bob Wade campaigned last year on the need to clean up the city's brownfield sites. Very much a visionary, he knows the impact this bill will have on the new city of Hamilton. He recognizes that we need to get those lands back into productive use for several reasons. Cleaning up and reusing those lands will not only ameliorate Hamilton's environment but will also provide new job opportunities and increase local tax revenues.

Mayor Wade has expressed his support of this bill, and I'm sure many other urban mayors across the province of Ontario would agree. This bill will go a long way to helping the urban mayors redevelop their brownfields in their communities.

As I said earlier, this proposed legislation is a win for Hamilton. It demonstrates the kind of commitment the provincial government is willing to make to ensure that our cities succeed. And in the new city of Hamilton, we

need to do everything we can to help that new city flourish and prosper. My ministry alone has committed to funding projects like the Highway 6 extension from the 403 to the John C. Munro airport. At a cost of \$33 million, the province alone will be financing that extension, without any funding from the city of Hamilton.

Construction of this project is now underway and will greatly assist Hamilton's economic development. This government has also been very clearly on the side of projects like the Red Hill Creek Expressway, which will bring further economic growth and benefit to the people of my community when it is completed.

This legislation is another example of the provincial government doing what is necessary to help urban cities like Hamilton prosper.

This bill will provide some flexibility to municipalities to deal with contaminated and abandoned properties that are in a position of tax arrears. I understand that in Hamilton millions of dollars in property taxes are now attributable to potentially contaminated sites. The mayor himself has expressed concerns about this particular situation. This legislation will allow, will give the opportunity to Hamilton, to deal with that specific problem.

The liability protection from Ministry of Environment orders for municipalities exercising authority for the purposes of a "tax sale" or other municipal responsibilities is very important to Hamilton. This bill is addressing the primary stumbling block for getting many properties on the market.

Last night I spoke with John Dolbec, who works with the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce, and he is extremely excited about this new bill coming through and the impact that it will have for Hamilton at this particular time.

Another reason why this bill is receiving a warm welcome in Hamilton is because it allows municipalities to deal with individual brownfield sites that are scattered throughout a municipality under the community improvement planning process. This means that Hamilton can begin cleaning up brownfield sites, not only in the downtown core, but in other industrial parts: the former city of Stoney Creek, in Dundas and in Flamborough. This legislation prevents Hamilton's cleanup efforts from becoming geographically constrained, restricted, as the city had done in the Bayfront area.

Lastly, this bill will enable municipalities to freeze or cancel the municipal portion of the property tax on brownfields that are being remediated.

Quite clearly, that alone becomes a major win for urban cities. It enables them to redevelop their brownfields. It enables them to provide the win to the developers and it enables the opportunity to limit the liability for the financial marketplace, for the developers themselves.

#### 1640

This bill is a win for urban municipalities, but I'm especially pleased to see that this is a significant win for the new city of Hamilton. It continues to demonstrate our government's commitment to its success for all residents in all of its communities. I know, from speaking to

numerous developers in the city of Hamilton, they have been crying for this for many years. The Speaker will know this himself. He has spoken about brownfield development and the need for getting on with it for a long time.

We now have an opportunity to put this bill forth. We now have an opportunity to make sure that municipalities themselves have the tools to enable brownfield redevelopment to become a reality. It enables the municipalities to reach out to the development community and become that catalyst to ensure that in my community, the new city of Hamilton, it will prosper. It will enable them to find the ways and the means to put numerous pieces of property worth millions of dollars back into active production and enable the tax base to grow, which enables the community itself to prosper in the long run.

It's been my pleasure to speak to this particular bill today. I'm encouraging all of the members to support the bill and I'm looking forward to its passage.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Davis Christopherson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** We're anxious very soon to enter the formal fray with the debate, but just before we do that, I want to say for the record that I know the new city of Hamilton probably as well as anybody in this House. I know Mayor Wade very, very well. Mayor Wade is a friend of mine. I know the kind of commitment that Mayor Wade has to the community and the kinds of hopes and dreams that Mayor Wade has for enabling legislation that will empower the new city of Hamilton to really get on with the job of brownfield development.

I think as the debate unfolds, we'll discover very quickly that, unlike the picture painted by the member for Stoney Creek, this legislation goes nowhere near far enough to truly empower municipalities like the great new city of Hamilton to get on with the task of doing the important brownfield development that needs to be done.

I think it would have been helpful too—and perhaps they've done this; maybe they've just missed it—had the minister and those who had offered some debating points on the government side of the House taken the time to read the Association of Municipalities of Ontario brownfields task force report and some of the issues and processes they had identified that needed to be put in place and that are clearly missing from this bill. Also it would have been helpful had the recommendations of the minister's own brownfields task force been examined a little bit more closely vis-à-vis the drafting of the legislation.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** This issue is of great importance to the communities in Niagara Centre: communities like Welland, Thorold, yes, and south St Catharines. The history of those communities is concurrent with the advent of the Industrial Revolution. Those are industrial-based communities that over the course of the last, now, century and a half were built by virtue of small factories becoming bigger ones, and

there's acreage after acreage of lands in those communities properly described as brownfields.

But the problem is, those cities have already been whacked in the course of the last six years. They've been hit hard over the course of the last six years. They, like every other municipality in this province, are forced to impose—forced, not through choice, because I tell you, city councils like the councils in Welland, Cindy Forster, mayor; Thorold, Robin Davidson; Pelham, Mayor Beamer, have been working hard to develop, and have developed, great efficiencies, no help from this government. But even at that they are being forced to impose property tax increase after property tax increase because of the downloading.

Now this government's saying, "Oh, we've cleared the track. Now you can start cleaning up and developing the brown lands." Well, sorry, you've already gutted the fiscal basis of these small communities in Ontario. You've already ripped them apart financially. You've already got them raising property taxes through no choice of their own as a direct result of this government's downloading. And now you're saying, "Oh, yes, we now invite you, but don't expect any"—you talk about accountability. This government doesn't want to have any financial accountability for helping to rectify cleanup and permit the development of these brown lands. They just say, "Oh, we're going to open the door. You pay the price. The money isn't there."

**Mr Dunlop:** I wanted to just make a comment—

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm sorry, member. As one of the speakers, you cannot comment. If you wish, you can be the one who does the two-minute response to all of the other comments, but we need someone who has not yet spoken from the government side. I'll keep talking as one of the government members works his way to his chair, and that member would be the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale who now has the floor.

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is a pleasure to see you in that chair because, like my colleague said, it's one less educated heckler.

It is a very important subject we are discussing today, the brownfields, because it does happen that as industries open, or sometimes in a recession industries close, or the trends change, and all of a sudden you have these buildings that are on very prime land and can be developed, it's very important to make sure that we look after them and make sure we give the decision-makers the opportunity to actually go ahead with the progress.

As the member from Simcoe North said before, we are all very concerned about the environment and we certainly want to do everything possible.

It is a fact that a lot of things about the environment in the past we have learned from our schoolchildren. I remember a number of years ago the kids would come home and talk about recycling and this and that. They'd say, "You can't do that. You can't be throwing cans in the garbage." That's how slowly, as adults, our minds

started thinking toward the environment, and I'm very happy that movement started.

As I said, all of us want to do something about the environment, like using existing infrastructure to make sure the resources are diverted and going ahead with the utilization of brown lands in that sense. I'm sure everybody in the House will agree—and it's one subject where all parties can agree—that at the same time we're doing something good for the environment, we are also redirecting resources to redevelop some of this for the good of the people.

Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is a pleasure to take part in this debate.

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston):** This bill professes to do a number of wonderful things, except the one thing it does not do is provide essential funding. Money is the key to this problem.

There's a great deal of risk associated with taking on development in brownfield sites. The private sector is not going to take on the enormous risk that's associated with the development of these sites. There are liability issues which are addressed to some extent in this bill, but there are civil lawsuits that could ensue from these brownfield sites that would still be attached to the new landowners. That's a concern.

The government has not made sufficient provision in terms of funding for these sites to be pursued with a great deal of success. The case in the United States where both the federal and the state governments have provided funding has proven a success. That is not what this government is proposing. There's a tremendous lack of funding, and I will get into questions around the lack of infrastructure spending, the kind of investment this government should have been making and is not making with regard to brownfield development sites. It is saying to municipalities, "Well, you go ahead and do it. We'll give you the tools," but the essential tool that's missing is provincial funding. A sufficient number of dollars has not been provided for municipalities to truly undertake these proposals, to work with the private sector. So the government says to municipalities, as they have always done, "Go ahead and do what you like, but we're not paying for it." Of course, municipalities, having suffered the anguish of downloading thus far, are not in a position to bring these sites forward. So this is a lot of hot air.

1650

**The Acting Speaker:** For a two-minute response, the Chair recognizes the member for Durham.

**Mr O'Toole:** It really is a pleasure to summarize and to think of the input today from Minister Hodgson, as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and then on top of that the Minister of Transportation from Stoney Creek taking time out from a cabinet meeting to come here and comment on the importance of this brownfield initiative to his riding, which is Stoney Creek, but it's the city of Hamilton where he's really trying to make it work.

The member from Simcoe North speaks on most topics, and that's important too.

The member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale summed it up so succinctly when he started talking about the contribution that youth have made to rethinking how we do things. We should listen; I know on this side we do. I'm a little suspicious of the other side. I know the NDP have always listened to youth. They've got Peter Kormos, who really hasn't grown up.

I was surprised by the member from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot. He's not trying to help Hamilton move forward. I think he'd be more comfortable if he came over here and worked with Brad Clark, worked with this government to move forward.

I think the comments of the member from Niagara Centre are brownfield sites in themselves. There's a lot of redevelopment that has to occur.

I think the most important thing is that it's an opportunity to move forward in the Smart Growth context. It's intelligent growth and it's common sense growth, meaning that when you drive by sites in downtown Hamilton, downtown Ottawa, downtown Toronto, and they're not developed, why? They are called brownfield sites. Why aren't people developing them? No one wants to assume the liability. This government has taken the first initiative but maintained respect for the environment.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr McMeekin:** I'm going to be sharing my time with the member from York South-Weston, Mr Cordiano; the member from Brant, Mr Levac; and the member from Eglinton-Lawrence, Mr Colle.

Just before we get started on the formal debate, I want to let the honourable member from Durham know—and there were other comments from the minister, the member from Stoney Creek, and the member from Simcoe North—that I've done more in my sleep to assist the new city of Hamilton than this government on the other side of the House has done in its entire five years.

Off the top, I want to say that there's a huge need for legislation to address the issue of brownfield sites throughout the province. It's important that we get on top of the dirty toxic little sites that have become such a tragic part of our industrial legacy and that we get on with the task as best we can of cleaning up these sites. However, once again, this government's attempt to bring in legislation and truly partner with municipalities to successfully deal with this important issue unfortunately falls way short of what's actually needed.

One of the members of my agricultural community suggested to me last week that vision without action is a dream but that action without vision is really a nightmare. We've had the nightmare of brownfields for far too long, and unfortunately this legislation, while it goes part of the way toward helping us resolve some of the issues, will continue to ensure that brownfield sites are a nightmare for communities all across this province and the great new city of Hamilton.

We're told that cleanup of brownfield sites is but a part of this government's well-rounded Smart Growth plan. During my speaking time, I want to comment not

only on Bill 56 but I want to further discuss this government's so-called Smart Growth agenda—or maybe lack of a true agenda—with respect to what's really needed in Ontario and things that are needed to make municipalities, as the minister had said, the strong, healthy and prosperous places we all want to see.

To begin, I want to acknowledge that while it's fair to be critical, it's also critical to be fair. In that context I want to be fair. In ministry background material on Bill 56 we find a very good written summary of the rationale for the need for brownfields legislation. For example, the government recognizes that there is actually a problem with contaminated, mostly industrial sites, often near our precious lakes and rivers. I suspect 20 years from now, a barrel of water is going to be worth just as much as a barrel of oil is today. That's a precious, precious resource the member for Durham knows that we have to shepherd.

The government also recognizes the need to protect the health and safety of our citizens. The Plastimet site in Hamilton—you know about that, Mr Speaker—the lead-contaminated sites in Port Colborne and numerous horror stories related recently to contaminated school sites provide good examples of how rehabilitating a site would indeed protect the health and safety of our citizens. We all acknowledge the travesty of Love Canal, and certainly no one wants to see that kind of tragedy unfold anywhere in Ontario.

The government also highlighted, to their credit, a number of new initiatives and processes ostensibly designed to serve as a catalyst for community revitalization and redevelopment, including, we're led to believe, the generation of additional local property taxes from abandoned sites. The member for Stoney Creek mentioned this en passant, talking about Hamilton. I know from chatting with Mayor Wade and others that there are some 130 brownfield sites in Hamilton, totalling some 3,400 acres altogether in desperate need of reclamation. A redevelopment of these sites would generate in the order of some \$15 million in local property tax. Do you realize that's almost half of what this government short-changed the great new city of Hamilton, just in the shortfall with their so-called revenue-neutral downloading program?

Finally, the government referenced municipal risks related to the assumption of property through tax sale and the related need for creative financing. I've had the privilege of serving in the municipal areas as the former mayor of the great town of Flamborough—the only municipality in all of Ontario that actually lowered taxes six years in a row—and I know from direct experience that municipalities are generally advised to stay as far away from brownfield site projects as they can because of that whole liability issue. I want to acknowledge that the government has moved in a somewhat positive direction in terms of clearing up some of these issues but nowhere near far enough. Predictably, the creative financing that they reference requires no provincial investment. It's interesting: everyone else has to be creative but, as the member from Welland acknowledged, there's

no obligation here to come to the table. Nor does it offer any acknowledgement at all of the historic failure, in many cases, of the Ministry of the Environment to properly monitor site contamination, a failure which in and of itself as led ultimately to this focus today on the need for brownfield redevelopment.

Sadly, and notwithstanding these factors, without a true partnership with both senior levels of government—I don't want to lay it all on the province—this bill and one Canadian dollar will buy the Minister of Municipal Affairs, or the mayor of Hamilton for that part, but one small black decaf coffee at any local Tim Horton's doughnut shop. Frankly, the legislation fails municipalities and virtually guarantees, as the minister had indicated, that this government will miss countless opportunities to help municipalities all across this province struggle with this important need.

#### 1700

Describing a couple of worthy objectives on paper is great, but it doesn't mean very much. I think it was Bobby Kennedy who once suggested that good judgment was based on experience, and experience invariably on bad judgment. My mother used to put it a little more simply. She said, "Teddy, go out and make mistakes, but at least make new ones." I wish she were here to give some counsel today to the members opposite.

In fairness, let me state clearly what I think is wrong with this legislation because the minister indicated, as you may recall, Mr Speaker, that he wanted some helpful suggestions because it was really important that this bill do what it was designed to do. So I want to start there.

First, while it provides municipalities with some additional tools, the tool box is still relatively empty. Instead of just the hammers and the screwdrivers we normally get, this government, and I'll admit it square up, has offered one additional tool: the measuring tape, but that measuring tape could just as easily be used to measure this government's failure to respond appropriately to the very advice that their own brownfields task force gave them and that the AMO task force gave them. Both talked at great length about the need to come to the table with some funding assistance.

The measuring tape also refers, I want to say, with respect to the relationship with the private sector. I happen to think there's an important role for the private sector, but private sector involvement is, after all, let's concede, profit-driven. It's different from public sector involvement. Private sector folk will get involved in those brownfield sites that maybe aren't as contaminated and will be a little easier to rehabilitate, where it could be shown that with a little bit of investment, working together they could make some money. There's nothing wrong with that. I'm OK with that, by and large. But wouldn't it have been wonderful if we had a government over there that said, "This isn't just about rehabilitating some of those good brownfield sites; it's about protecting the real health and safety of our citizens"?

The member from Stoney Creek talked about what is geographically driven versus what is criterion-driven. I

would much rather have seen something criterion-driven there.

Once again, when we talk about a real partnership, we see a provincial government that's gone AWOL again.

*Interjection.*

**Mr McMeekin:** The member opposite laughs. I want to tell you, I've been in 22 communities all across this province as part of my Let's Build a Bridge tour. Do you know what they say in every single community we've been in? "We need a new relationship with the provincial government, one that's stable, one that's reliable, one where they listen, one where they consult, one where they quit abandoning us and the real needs we have." That's what we're hearing. That's being said about water; it's being said about downloading; it's being said about assessment problems in the OPAC situation. It's this no-fault insurance this government has: whenever anything goes wrong, it's somebody else's fault. You notice that? David, have you noticed that tendency? It's always somebody else's fault.

It's the mayor of Walkerton's fault. It's the staff person's fault. It's Allan Rock's fault. It's my fault as the mayor of Flamborough. It's always somebody else's fault. In fact, I've never once heard a cabinet minister on the other side get up in this House and say, "You know what? We messed up and we want to 'fess up. We were wrong. We've learned something from it"—

*Interjection.*

**Mr McMeekin:** Other than that, other than the moose. "We've learned something from it and we want to make"—I take it back—"things right."

The second major problem has to do, clearly, with the lack of provincial funding.

*Interjection.*

**Interjection:** Stop picking on him.

**Mr McMeekin:** Yes, quit picking on him. Don't pick on him, member from Brant.

The minister did say he hoped that whatever we did would be well done. He said that what this bill is intended to do needs to be successful and he invited, you may recall, he said, "Please, give us some tips about how we can make things better."

As one who's always wanting to be helpful—some who know me well, to a fault—I want to share a few thoughts of what I think is needed to make this work. I work from the principle that every time you say something negative you should say three things positive, because you're not going to learn from the negatives, but maybe there's a tiny gem somewhere in what's offered from this side of the House that this government might want to embrace and use for that win-win situation that we're always hearing about.

I want to suggest that this government might have done something really, really helpful had they taken the kind of action that the province of Quebec took or that great state of New York took when both actually came to the table with some money, some \$30 million in the case of Quebec and some \$200 million in the case of New York, specifically articulated in what they called the

environmental restoration project funding program—\$200 million dedicated exclusively to the rehabilitation of municipal brownfield sites.

Had we seen an industrial heritage fund or some kind of public sector agency spring out in the context of the bill, I suspect there might well have been people on this side of the House who would have embraced that. Instead, what do we get? We get this nonsense about SuperBuild. On that, I want to say to members opposite, as we've been around the province their take on SuperBuild is that it's one giant crapshoot, one giant lottery. They don't always understand the rules, and unless they go out and hire somebody with great political connections, they often don't hear back for, in the case of one municipality, well over a year. We heard about cases like that as we travelled the province, municipalities saying, "We've hired so-and-so because we know they're close to the government. We figure that's going to get us our SuperBuild funding."

There are a couple of ways we can move forward on this Bill 56. We could move forward the smart way or we can move forward the dumb way. Given the choice, and for my part and for our party's part, the members on this side of the House, I hope we'd go the smart route. While this legislation may look good on paper, frankly it doesn't add up to much, just like, at least to date, this government's entire Smart Growth plan doesn't add up to much.

For example, let me read to you what was offered in one of the Toronto dailies today with respect to Smart Growth, the comments of someone from the Sierra Club, which perhaps some members opposite have had an opportunity to read. It's entitled "Smart Growth 'Dumb': Harris Given F+ for his 'Green Wash' of the Term." It reads:

"Premier Mike Harris's version of smart growth—building new highways, encouraging urban sprawl and refusing to fund public transit operations—is the antitheses of good urban planning, a well-known environmental organization says.

"Sierra Club of Canada spokesperson, Janet Pelley"—someone else you routinely ignore; anyone who's really concerned about the environment—"told a news conference yesterday Harris has sullied the term 'smart growth,' a catchword for environmentally sustainable development that originated with former US vice-president Al Gore."

She notes, "'This is a legitimate term and it is a good term and it should not be abused by the Premier to 'green wash' the strip-malling of Ontario' ... Premier Harris says he has embraced smart growth, but the facts actually show he doesn't know what he is talking about.'

"The Sierra Club issued a report card giving Harris an F+ for his version of smart growth, which calls for five more highways in and around greater Toronto and the Niagara region."

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She says, "'Now any dummy knows that building new highways is not part of smart growth.'

"The Tory government's public consultations on its smart growth program ends June 18.

"The term smart growth is used in the United States for growth based on preserving farmland"—preserving farmland, you've heard of that, eh?"—"and green space and on promoting public transit and communities that integrate work, shopping, living and recreation spaces as well as all income levels.

"Public transit forms the backbone of smart growth, and in Ontario we have no provincial (operating) funding for transit."—"the only jurisdiction in the so-called civilized world that doesn't provide; even in the uncivilized world—"That is not smart growth, that's dumb growth," Pelley said.

"She said the 'helter-skelter' pattern of development in southern Ontario is costing the taxpayers millions of dollars for extra infrastructure to supply roads, sewers and water.

"Toronto's population is expected to grow by 1.6 million people over the next 20 years," Pelley said.

"The idea that cities can build their way out of congestion is a tired old solution from the 1950s that many studies have proven wrong .... This pattern of development generates polluted runoff that threatens our water and also impairs our quality of life."

Municipalities all across Ontario are once again getting the short stick from this provincial government. The bill goes a few short steps toward a real solution. It helps a bit; even Mayor Wade, I suspect, would acknowledge that it helps a bit. But for it to really work we need a reliable, stable partnership. We need the province at the table. A friend who did some overseas work once described to me his definition of poverty. He said, "Poverty is having lots of food on the table and no one to eat it with, or having lots of people gathered around the table but no food."

I think, to be perfectly frank and blunt, this legislation leaves us in a state of poverty in this province. The thinking behind it is poor thinking. It doesn't go far enough. As I said earlier, too many of the very specific recommendations that were made by your own brownfields task force have been ignored.

I'll conclude with this observation. "Municipalities have a direct interest in revitalizing the sites within their boundaries. Potential liability, a lack of private sector interest in the majority of brownfields, and the absence of financial support for remediation efforts"—did you hear that? this is from the AMO study—"represent the greatest obstacles.

"Municipalities are willing to take a leadership role in promoting brownfields redevelopment but they can only do so in partnership with the private sector, the provincial government and the federal government."

They conclude by saying, and I agree with this, "By working together, we can all benefit from this modern day alchemy and turn brownfields into gold."

**Mr Cordiano:** I am happy to be up on this bill, to engage in the debate. Again, this is an initiative by a government that attempts to go in the right direction but

does not provide the necessary funding for it. It says to municipalities, "This is a great idea. We should redevelop these brownfield sites. But you handle it. We turn it over to you because you have the resources to deal with this."

Looking at the Fung report, for example, that commented on redeveloping Toronto's waterfront, they estimated that the cleanup bill for Toronto's waterfront would be on the order of \$1 billion: \$1 billion to clean up Toronto's waterfront, the brownfields sites that are along the port lands. Toronto alone has 4,500 hectares of brownfields, the equivalent of 30 High Parks. That's just Toronto. Around the province, the number is enormous. The cleanup bill could be in the billions of dollars.

This government is providing very little by way of financial support. It suggests that the SuperBuild fund will provide some funding. In order to access those funds, municipalities have to provide matching funding. Of course, municipalities are strapped for cash after this government has downloaded and dumped on them additional responsibilities.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Cordiano:** I do believe Mel Lastman is correct when he suggests that this government—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Cordiano:** I've always liked Mel. He was my mayor for many years. As a matter of fact, he is right on this mess. He is correct in suggesting that this province is shortchanging the city of Toronto, that it is not providing the necessary funding, and this is yet another example of that shortchange.

To go on, US cities and other Canadian provinces have recognized that by working together—that is to say the federal and the state governments—by providing necessary funding, they can rehabilitate these brownfield sites in key cities such as Baltimore, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. Those brownfield sites have been reclaimed. They're helping to spawn a new era of growth in the core of those cities. It does work if the funding is there from the state level—in our case, the provincial level—and the federal level.

Now, to say to municipalities, "Well, you match the funds," is all fine and good, but municipalities, as I say, have been downloaded with additional responsibilities and do not have the funding necessary. There is a tremendous shortfall on the part of municipalities just to keep up with the responsibilities they've been given as a result of downloading thrust upon them by this provincial government.

When we look at what this government has done with the whole area of infrastructure—let's talk about Smart Growth, as my colleague alluded to many times in his remarks earlier. Smart Growth also includes a plan for public transportation to be expanded. Well, it doesn't fit in this government's scheme of things; it does not speak to that. The vision that this government has put forward is to build additional highways through some very sensitive areas of our province such as the Niagara Peninsula. Development is growing at an alarming rate throughout

the Niagara Peninsula and in the 905 region of the greater Toronto area, where we do have urban sprawl taking place at an unprecedented level, chewing up valuable agricultural lands.

I could go along with this if the government suggested that it would be prepared to fund, on a long-term basis, a rapid transit system, if it had a vision for rapid transit to be expanded throughout the greater Toronto area, because that's where it is needed. You cannot get from Mississauga city centre to Oshawa city centre in any reasonable amount of time using public transit. It is simply not possible. It would take you an entire day to get there. There are people moving between Mississauga city centre and Oshawa or York or the city of Vaughan, many of the cities in the GTA. People are moving to and from those places using what else but highways? The gridlock has reached unbearable proportions. It is hurting our economy.

The infrastructure that we have in place is dilapidating. Why? Because this government continues to do what it does best, as it suggests, and that is to dismantle government operations. The only modus operandi that it sees fit to pursue is to continue to look at reducing government revenues by all forms and means and passing the burden on to municipalities and increasing fees on all fronts, but it has not the revenues to do what is necessary to build infrastructure in this province.

**1720**

Yes, it says it has SuperBuild. Well, frankly, some municipalities have made applications to SuperBuild and they're being delayed. There's been no response for over a year in some cases. So it's not an open-ended funding scheme with SuperBuild.

I think this government is dragging its heels because it does not have the money. It's not interested in investing in infrastructure. As I say, we sorely lack a public infrastructure system for public transit; a vision for the greater Toronto area. That's what's desperately needed for our economy. You cannot continue to build highways and alleviate the problems that we have by building highways alone. That's simply not going to accomplish what we need for the future of growth in the greater Toronto area, and beyond that into the Niagara peninsula. The infrastructure demands are enormous. The gridlock will continue to be felt if you continue to build highways alone, if we don't pursue a path whereby we promote public transit.

Of course, this government has gotten out of supporting public transit of any kind. It, too, has passed that responsibility on to municipalities. The fare box in the city of Toronto supports public transit almost entirely now. That is just devastating for public transit, not to mention the terrible effect that has on our air quality. We just have too many people in cars these days travelling to and from work. That should be displaced by the use of public transit, but it's not available. I cannot fault people for using their cars when there is no other option to get around in a reasonable amount of time.

We need a vision for public transit that extends to the greater Toronto region, that includes York region, Peel, Halton, Durham and possibly goes into Hamilton and down into Niagara Falls, because that is the area of rapid growth, the engine that feeds the economy of this great country. We are starving it.

We are an export-oriented nation. We need additional roads, but in order to deal with the gridlock problem over the next 20 years, we simply can't do that by building roads. If you build more roads, more cars will be on those roads, along with an additional number of trucks. You'll never alleviate the problem.

It does tie into the development of brownfields, because you have these brownfields that exist in municipalities in the greater Toronto area, but we have to deal with the question of greater intensification for these municipalities. It is a laudable goal, and I support that, but you have to give municipalities the funding necessary to make this possible.

There are some other issues with regard to liability in this bill. The government likes to say that this question is dealt with by the bill, that if new landowners follow the prescribed MOE site cleanup assessment and the use of a certified professional for the cleanup, the new owners would be exempt from liability. That's not entirely true. New landowners are still subject to civil liabilities and officers and directors of these corporations are also subject to some level of liability. So this is not clear. I would suggest to you that the private sector is not going to be involved in these projects if those items are not cleared up.

In addition to that, with respect to cleanup and the use of MOE officials, I'd like to know how it is that you're going to have officials conduct a timely assessment of these brownfield sites if there aren't enough MOE inspectors on hand. Since this government cut Ministry of the Environment staff levels by at least 900, as we know in previous budgets, I'd like to know how it is we're going to have timely assessments and inspections being made of these brownfield sites.

Those are some very real concerns I have with respect to this initiative. I think if you are going to give this some real credence, you have to provide the necessary funding. I looked in last year's budget and I looked at this year's budget: the funding for infrastructure is simply not there. Using this method of pawning it off, saying, "We have the SuperBuild fund. That's going to solve all of our problems," frankly, it's not working. There are delays in the application process. We simply don't have the infrastructure being built today that we needed 10 years ago. By the time we get around to building the infrastructure, another number of years will have passed and we will be behind the eight ball yet again.

I've got to remind this government that we have been living through prosperous times and you have not made the essential investments in infrastructure that are necessary to keep the economy growing. Do not underestimate how important that is. You can't get it going with the private sector if you're not prepared to put in additional

dollars, because the requirements are far greater than you've estimated them to be.

I think there are some problems with this legislation that go beyond what's contained in the legislation, and the lack of funding is a real sore point here.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Brant.

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on where you are sitting at this moment. I know you will do a great job.

I want to thank the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot: as always, very logical discussions that we have. The member for York South-Weston always keeps in mind the ability of a community to pull together and use its base as the reason why he's reaching out and asking the government to help us in this case. And I know that the member for Eglinton-Lawrence has a deep interest in this because his municipality is affected by it.

I think we should begin by naming the bill. I'm going to provide, for the people who are listening, the authentic name of this bill and then probably wade into the little game that this government often does about how it names its bills, what it's trying to do to the people of Ontario or trying to hide from the people of Ontario.

This is called Bill 56, Brownfields Statute Law Amendment Act, 2001, or shall I say Bill 56, brownfield download amendment act, 2001? Or shall I say Bill 56, the brownfield—you pay for it and we tell you what to do act, 2001? Or shall I call it Bill 56, brownfield—we seek your input, we say we consulted but we don't take the key advice that you've given us in partnership for paying for this problem act, 2001? Or finally, shall we call it Bill 56, brownfield—superbuild 2, the sequel?

Quite frankly, I'm going to make it very clear that there are parts of this legislation that were sadly needed and there were consultations and advice provided by some very notable people in the province of Ontario. We heard from—and I would like to make sure that I give credit for this—a councillor in Brantford, from ward 5, who has probably one of the oldest areas in town. I grew up there, and quite frankly in Eagle Place we had industry as far back as the 1800s. So during the Industrial Revolution we had all of these companies locate in our area. We have the Grand River, a heritage river, going through that riding.

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** Paris, Ontario.

**Mr Levac:** In Paris, Ontario. We have rivers. We have a man-made lake, Mohawk Lake, right in the heart of this industrial area, found to be filled with toxins. We have the downtown area, in which we're trying to recover a lot of those assets again. In Brantford we are a brownfield community that needs this action.

As a matter of fact, I'm glad the johnny-come-latelies are starting to talk about this, because part of my platform, and even before that the municipality's platform, was, let's move on brownfields because we know the economic value of making this major recovery. We don't want to be a partner in urban sprawl. We want to make

sure that our industrial sites are clean, safe and renewable. Quite frankly, I'm glad to see that you've finally hooked on after the pressure that Councillor Marguerite Ceschi-Smith from ward 5 in Brantford has put on the government, and Councillor Paul Urbanowicz from ward 1, who has a very serious problem in his ward in the riding of Brant, in the city of Brantford.

1730

I want to point out a rather interesting phenomenon that took place. As a result of concerns raised by the constituents of Brantford after the last recent fire in a site that is a brownfield site—and I have evidence here dated May 17, postmarked before Mr Hodgson made his report. I'm very proud to say that I wrote the minister a letter before an editorial from the Brantford Expositor said maybe the MPP should get involved. Quite frankly, I did.

"Dear Minister Hodgson:

"Please find enclosed an article from the Brantford Expositor regarding yet another fire that has occurred in an abandoned factory site in my riding"—a brownfield site.

"Minister, I urge you to act quickly"—I must have a lot of influence, because he released his report the next day—"on comprehensive legislation regarding brownfield sites in municipalities"—comprehensive—"legislation that would give municipalities both the necessary powers and funding they need in order to deal with this blight effectively. Councillor Marguerite Ceschi-Smith of Brantford has been an active participant and vocal advocate for the legislation your government should be tabling in order to deal with sites such as Northern Globe.

"With proper urban management, old dilapidated buildings such as the Northern Globe building can be torn down and the property, after appropriate cleaning takes place, can be turned into useful green space or much-needed affordable housing in our older neighbourhoods," or even reusable industrial sites.

"Councillor Paul Urbanowicz from ward 1 is requesting that this building be torn down. I support this measure, and hope that the provincial government responds with financial assistance to help eliminate this hazardous site from our community."

This was sent to all of the people concerned: Marguerite Ceschi-Smith; Paul Urbanowicz, our mayor; Ted McMeekin—he received a copy of this letter and acknowledged it to me immediately; and the minister. So we're on top of this.

Our municipalities across the province know that this must be acted upon. But what I think is important to point out is that although the government keeps referring to, in their side of the story, the fact that they've listened and they've heard all these experts speak, one of the most overriding responses that was given to them, report after report, was that we must form that financial partnership.

We want to see the government put its money where its mouth is. Quite frankly, it hasn't happened. They've referred it and deferred it to SuperBuild, but what we forget to tell the public out there is that there are hooks to going to SuperBuild. And here's one of the major hooks:

the municipality's got to fork over quite a large percentage of the money as well. Do they want to put in some money to the program? Absolutely. But what's the problem? Why did I mention the brownfield-downfield-downville bill? What they said was, "You've downloaded us already."

Many municipalities across this province are already looking at tax increases in order to provide them with the services they once had. After reviewing those budgets, looking at the essential services that those municipalities have to provide, they still ended up having to say to us, "Is there anything we can do with this government to tell them to stop downloading these costs? They're not revenue-neutral." Because they weren't revenue-neutral, you've added to the problem by now telling them this brownfield bill is going to be the saviour of brownfields in Ontario, but nobody's going to be able to afford it. It should be a consistent amount of money that's available to all municipalities.

I want to make a comment about the bill's content itself, part III of the Municipal Act amendments: "Part III of the bill amends the Municipal Act. The amendments allow municipalities to pass bylaws providing for the municipal tax assessment to assist with the environmental rehabilitation of the properties that do not meet the standards prescribed for filing a record of site condition in the environmental site registry in accordance with the amendments to the Environmental Protection Act...." That means you, municipalities, have to foot that; you have to forgo those taxes. "With the approval of the Minister of Finance, these bylaws may also apply to school taxes."

What does that say? They're not going to allow the municipalities to worry about the school taxes, because they've got to get permission from the Minister of Finance. Let me ask this simple question to our municipalities: do you think for one minute the Minister of Finance is going to turn around and say, "Sure, go ahead. Let us forgive taxes"? Not a chance.

In the next part, the bill amends the Municipal Tax Sales Act. "The amendments provide that, if a public tax sale of property fails to find a purchaser, the municipality may acquire the property." So it's, "You go ahead and spend the money but we're not going to help you." You can acquire the property, but you're not required to do so. How nice of you. "If the municipality does not acquire the property within one year after the tax sale, the tax arrears certificate is deemed to be cancelled." Thank you very much.

We're not going to support the bill. We say that the idea is correct. The consultation was half done. Brownfield redevelopment offers real opportunity, if the government would acknowledge that for Ontario communities, but the real tool that is needed is redevelopment money. The key element, the tool that is missing is the government stepping up to the plate. You set the table but you don't put any food on it. You say, "Come to the table but you can't have any food." Unfortunately, this is one element of their Smart Growth that seems to promote

something that is actually intelligent but they're making everyone else pay the piper.

The panel this government asked for was comprised of representatives from the municipal, development and environmental sectors. Each one of those sectors came up with the right idea, the right concept and the right direction, but unfortunately what happened was that when the key components of all those sectors said, "Please provide us with the funds as a partner to do so," they walked away from the table. But now they get to say, "We consulted and here is the great idea we've got." I'll tell you, the mayor, Councillor Ceschi-Smith and everyone else is saying, "Right idea, but please, where's the money? You've downloaded us to death. We can't afford anything else, but please provide us with the help." They said no. They've abandoned them.

The term "brownfields" is used to describe these abandoned lands. Quite frankly, we know that other than in Brantford there are sites across the province that need this rehabilitation that would involve all—I say all—of the municipalities in this wonderful rehabilitation idea that has been floated for many years with, still, no funds, no opportunity, just a lot of empty words that everybody already knew. What's unfortunate about it is that this government doesn't even want to acknowledge it. They seem to be taking credit for everything that's being said today. Unfortunately the grassroots people who have been working in this province to come up with the solution looked to this government for assistance and they got the cold shoulder. I'm terribly sorry that the municipality of Brantford and all our ridings had to put up with this show, but no go.

**Mr Colle:** I certainly appreciate the comments of my colleagues, and first of all, the former mayor of Flamborough, the member from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot—I can't forget Aldershot. I also heard our colleague from York South-Weston and our colleague from Brant, formerly known as Kingsville.

I would like to perhaps make a few different comments because I think our colleagues have covered a number of the areas already quite thoroughly. One of the things I'm most concerned about is that the attitude of this legislation is again one that sort of tries to indicate they want to do the right thing because people are saying that getting rid of brownfields is the right thing. It encourages development on existing infrastructure and not on new greenfields or farm fields, so that is something we all fundamentally agree has to be done for us to survive as a city or a region.

We can't keep building on the family farm, we can't keep paving and bulldozing family farms, and we can't keep destroying our rivers, streams or ravines from Halton all the way to Cobourg. We have to basically follow what other nations are doing, and what the United States in fact is way ahead of us on, and that is building on existing urban envelopes. That's the key, I think, to sustainable growth.

**1740**

As the government tries to do that, as my colleagues have mentioned, there is very little help that they give to the local level, the people who pay property taxes. A lot of the burden of undertaking this policy—which benefits everyone, especially the provincial government, which will gain all kinds of tax revenues—is that the local property taxpayer is going to be asked, basically, to share a disproportionate amount of responsibility of undertaking this policy by the provincial government.

As you know, the local property taxpayers in the province of Ontario pay more property taxes almost, on a proportional basis, than anyone else in North America. They now not only pay for basic garbage and fire services and police services; in something that's unprecedented internationally, not just in North America, local property taxpayers are now being asked to fund public housing—done nowhere else in the world—on the property tax base.

Public transit—whether it's GO in the regions or TTC or York regional transit—that is on the property taxpayers' bill: unprecedented in the world. Ambulance services, a proportion of social services: all on your property tax bill. So if those responsibilities weren't pushed on the property taxpayers of Aldershot or the property taxpayers of Windsor, perhaps there wouldn't be this criticism of this bill to the extent that certainly my colleagues have put forward.

But since you have these unprecedented downloads on property taxpayers, when you look at this bill, we have to stand up and say that one of the concerns about this initiative—which is, I think, generally, in an organic way, a good initiative—is that it asks more of the burden of doing something that is beneficial for the whole province and the provincial government on to lower tier municipalities and their property taxpayers.

The success of brownfield redevelopment and regeneration and restoration has been as a result of direct investment from provincial or state governments into the municipalities as an inducement, as an investment to make this a reality. Without that kind of investment in some kind of regeneration trust fund, some kind of greening trust fund, these initiatives will not be successful. They will be at best ad hoc, very spotty, but they won't be a comprehensive success because some municipalities will not be able to afford these initiatives because there's too much of a cost brought to bear on their property taxpayers. Where they're faced with property tax increases or cutting services and paying for transit, public housing, and some of the roads have been downloaded on them, they cannot afford to spend money they don't have on this provincial initiative.

We hope that maybe for a change this government will listen to property taxpayers, will listen to the opposition and perhaps set up a regeneration fund that you will get back a hundredfold if you clean up those brownfield sites properly and comprehensively. So there's a return for the provincial government to do things right, and there's no

return for anyone if you expect the municipalities to carry the cost of this by themselves.

I think there's been, really, over the last number of years, those of you who know Toronto—I know my own general area—there's been some great success stories almost despite the lack of provincial co-operation in bringing back old industrial sites to successful, livable sites. For instance, at the base of Casa Loma there used to be the old Sealtest factory site for many, many decades. It was transformed into a very successful townhouse development. It sits right at the base of Casa Loma, right near public transit. It's a great success story.

If you look at the old American Standard factory at Lansdowne and Dupont, it has been cleaned up, and in fact there's an apartment building that's gone up there on that site. There's a site right now at Weston Road and St Clair—the old Weston Bakery site—where housing is going in. But that basically took the municipalities on their own, and a lot of risk on behalf of investors, to make that a reality.

It can happen. I think the private sector's willing to do it, municipalities are willing to do it. The province now is saying, "Do it," but they're not putting their money where their mouth is. That is what's missing in this legislation: some kind of funding mechanism which doesn't download another huge responsibility on those property taxpayers who, again, are paying more than anybody else pays in North America here in Ontario. We're asked to pay for so many things here and growing by the minute.

I'd also like to ask the Speaker to take into account another interesting thing. There is also a total lack of compatibility with what this legislation says and what the Ontario Municipal Board is doing with this government. The Ontario Municipal Board, as you know, is an appointed, unaccountable body that makes incredible numbers of planning decisions for this government, and it makes decisions that are sometimes not compatible with what the government is saying or what local municipalities are saying. Certainly it usually overrules what citizens are saying.

I'll give you an example: in my own riding there's a wonderful affordable housing complex, Rosewell Court, which has been there very successfully for 50 years, right at Avenue Road and Lawrence—affordable housing, good living conditions, right next door to Lytton Park, which has beautiful homes, great schools. Well, a developer came along and said, "I want to bulldoze those affordable rental townhouses," and 99% of the people in the area came to meetings by the thousands and said, "Why are you bulldozing these affordable buildings which are intensified?" There's a lot of good intensity, a lot of good density there. They're bulldozing them because the developer wants to put up condos. Why put up the condos where you already have intensification, you have good affordable housing? Put your condos down where the brownfield sites are, not where there's existing intensification, not where it impacts on people's ability to enjoy their neighbourhood.

Here's an example where the Ontario Municipal Board is obviously not connected with this government or its so-called policies of smart growth. It is totally in a world by itself. It didn't listen to a thousand people who said, "Don't bulldoze." It didn't listen to the city of Toronto who said, "Protect that affordable housing that's there." The municipality said, "There's already enough density there. Put those condos somewhere else." No, the Ontario Municipal Board said, "We don't care what a thousand people said. We don't care what the Lytton Park Ratepayers Association said. We don't care what the Metro Federation of Tenants said. We agree with the one developer, that one property owner who says, 'I don't care what the other thousand tenants say. We're going to bulldoze and do what we want.'"

If this government is serious about directing development into brownfield sites, they better call in their friends they appoint to the Ontario Municipal Board and give them a shake—a good hard shake—because those people who are appointed to that board think that they are basically above the public, above ratepayers, above, I'd even guarantee, any individual or planning directives this government has. They are a government almost unto themselves—not even a government; they're basically an oligarchy that's been appointed by this government and runs free with no controls.

I don't see any of this in the legislation, that we direct, somehow, intensification into the brownfield sites and not bulldoze existing affordable housing sites or compatible neighbourhoods which took decades to build up. The OMB comes along and says, "I don't care whether for 100 years people have spent their blood, sweat and tears building up successful neighbourhoods like Lytton Park." The OMB doesn't care about that. It says, "No. We, who are appointed to the OMB, are going to decide what that neighbourhood's future is going to be like." That is not fair and it's not right and it's not good planning. It's something this government better wake up to.

I should also mention that the whole brownfield initiative is, I guess, part of this spinning the government's been doing about smart growth. I think it's meeting today or tomorrow at the Hilton hotel, consulting with whom I don't know. Certainly it's not consulting with ordinary people, who will tell you this government's so-called spin growth doesn't work unless you're committed to public transit. You can't have smart growth unless you have a government that commits to the everyday funding of the operating expenses of GO Transit or of the TTC, or of all transit systems.

**1750**

This government is not talking smart growth when it just talks about highway expansion. I read in the paper today that they want to widen the 400 to 12 lanes through Barrie. You'll be widening highways forever. You'll be widening highways to Niagara; you'll have wall-to-wall pavement all the way to Niagara Falls. It will never solve your transportation problems. If you're really interested in achieving sustainability, you have to invest in GO Transit. You have to have all-day service. Why not run

an all-day train service to Niagara Falls from Union Station? But no, this government's hell-bent on paving, paving, paving.

In fact, look what happened. The 407 was supposed to solve all our traffic problems north of Toronto. Well, as you know, what happened is that the 401 is basically a parking lot. It's a full-time parking lot. The Don Valley parking lot exists. The 407 is so expensive, ordinary taxpayers cannot even use it. Meanwhile, the Spanish consortium and SNC Lavalin become mega-millionaires at the expense of the Ontario taxpayer and they increase the tolls on the highway. Whether you do it by tolls or whether you do it by widening highways to 12, 15 or 100 lanes, you can't unlock gridlock and make smart growth happen unless you put some money into a balanced infrastructure that allows people to get to work by train, by bus, by streetcar in an affordable way that is not paid for just on your property taxes. Ironically, we sit here today, and in the greater Toronto area, certainly in Toronto, TTC fares are going up, services are being cut back, night bus routes are being cut back. It's really contradictory.

I'd like to make one comment. Someone mentioned about the city of Toronto complaining about the downloading. The city of Toronto has made a very direct challenge to this government: if this government believes its downloading figures are revenue-neutral, the city of Toronto, Mayor Lastman and Deputy Mayor Case Ootes, have said, "Bring in the Provincial Auditor. Let him look at your books to see whether you're telling the truth about downloading." This government is afraid to call in the Provincial Auditor because they know they fudged the figures, that downloading is not revenue-neutral. Again, I challenge this government, if downloading is revenue-neutral, to bring in the Provincial Auditor. Obviously you won't because you know your figures are not the correct ones. The local taxpayers have the right figures; you don't.

**The Acting Speaker:** It is now time for two-minute questions or comments.

The floor recognizes—the Chair recognizes—the member for Toronto-Danforth.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** That's the first time I've heard you refer to yourself as "the floor," Mr Speaker. But this is my first opportunity to congratulate you on being in the chair. I must say I'm very impressed by your ability already, your first time in the chair, to name us all by our ridings. I think that's to be applauded. As you know, I went through that system myself and it took me a much longer time.

I will get my opportunity to speak, I guess, when this bill comes up again, and I will be doing the full hour for my caucus. I'm sure you're all going to be glued to your seats to hear what I have to say about this bill and, believe me, there is plenty.

In response to the many Liberals who spoke today, however, I would say the issues that were raised are ones that I hope the government will listen to and pay attention to. I'm going to be talking a lot about my views

of what real smart growth is as well, and some other issues around municipal affairs right now, downloading and all kinds of issues that are part of this bill we're talking about today, but specifically about this brownfield development that we need to see happening.

I spoke specifically to the minister and told him the NDP caucus very much wants to see legislation which would allow this kind of brownfield development to take place, but I also told the minister that we need public hearings, which he has agreed to. Unlike the education situation we are in, he has agreed to do that.

Many of the issues raised need to be dealt with before our party can support the bill. The best way to do that would be through committee. I certainly hope the government will allow us that opportunity.

**Mr Dunlop:** I'm pleased to be able to stand and make a few comments today, particularly on the members from the Liberal opposition. After listening to their comments, I don't know whether they're supporting the bill or not. I'm assuming they're not at this point.

Some of the comments I want to speak to: first, the member from Eglinton-Lawrence made a comment that we're building a highway to Barrie of six lanes. I think that's how you worded it. That is one option we're looking at. The Ministry of Transportation for Ontario is doing a study. They're doing studies through the whole 400 corridor network right up to Highway 11 at Barrie. One option is the six-laning.

Another option is a train route. Mr Tascona, my colleague from Barrie-Simcoe-Brampton, convinced the government in the last term to acquire the land in case that railway to Simcoe county was needed. Many people support that. That's being discussed as part of the study. I think it's only fair that we don't say there's going to be a six-lane highway, for sure, to Barrie.

I want to make one further comment on the brownfields, on Bill 56. I like the advantage of what it does for our infrastructure, being able to utilize the infrastructure we have in our municipalities to redevelop that property. It means tremendous savings, not only for the municipalities but for the developers as well, because they'll reuse those services, like storm water and sewer, even some of the services like natural gas and cable to the site as well. Those are my comments. It has been a pleasure to speak today on that.

**Mr O'Toole:** I want to follow up on my colleague's comments. Smart Growth is really the debate in this particular bill, brownfields being specific, but if you apply the theory of innovation and the theory of creativity—I think the member just mentioned that.

I met yesterday with the Railway Association of Canada. I know that many members have. I'd like to put on the record, with respect, the hard work of Bill Rowat from the railway association, the president; Bruce Burrows; as well as Ronald Mason, and he's from Canadian Pacific Railway. They're talking about short lines.

I would put on the record that clearly this government is looking at creative, innovative suggestions for the growth that's going to hit this province. For those who

want to stand in the way of redevelopment, both green-field sites and creative alternatives to Smart Growth, they'll find a thousand excuses, negative reasons not to try and support, at least in a positive way, some of the innovative suggestions of this government.

The alternative, their resistance to change and being creative, is more stall, more encroachment on—the recent freeze on the Oak Ridges moraine: I'm proud this government is prepared to look at innovative ways to manage growth.

Why do we get the growth? A good part of it is that the federal government allocates some 400,000—we get 60% of all the people, the new Canadians. They're welcome, with their ideas. Where do they come? They come primarily to the GTA. They're welcome. I might say that the federal government doesn't send the dollars. We get 60% of all new Canadians; we get 40% of the dollars. Our point here is that we need to accommodate the vision for new Canadians and existing Canadians, who are growing. The population of the GTA is larger than most of the provinces. Smart Growth: these are the options. I think this government is moving forward. I want to hear the opposition too.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? Hearing none, one of the lead speakers for a two-minute response. There are no other two-minute comments, although there's a slot left; it's not being filled. I will recognize one of you, not both. The Chair recognizes the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot.

1800

**Mr McMeekin:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Always west to east.

This has been a good debate. For our part, we have taken very seriously Minister Hodgson's invitation to make positive suggestions to help improve this bill.

I believe the Minister of Municipal Affairs really does want to try to do the right thing and he's really pleading in this House today for some help. And do you know what? He needs some help because this bill is quite inadequate. That's why my colleague Mr Colle and others have literally gone out of our way to be so forthcoming today with positive suggestions designed to improve this legislation. Let me just recap a few of those.

First and foremost, it's absolutely incumbent on this government to revisit and to reread their own task force's recommendations. They might want to read AMO's report as well.

Then they should move quickly to focus on this important issue by actually creating a separate industrial heritage fund. They should stop abandoning our great cities by beginning anew to work with municipal leaders, the federal government and yes, even the private sector. They should listen and understand for once—I know it's difficult—the need to share expertise and training resources. They should focus on prevention to maximize the liability of the people who have actually committed the polluting act. Finally, they should come to the table.

My final plea is, please don't put your money where your hearts are. Put your money where your mouth is. You're talking the talk; walk the walk.

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr David Christopherson):** Pursuant to standing order 37, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made. The member for Chatham-Kent-Essex has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given today by the Minister of Health. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

#### DOCTORS' SERVICES

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** Indeed, this afternoon I put a question to the Minister of Health and asked about the community-based radiology clinic of Dr Charles Gervais. He gave me an answer about cancer care, treatment and the independence of the new cancer centres. I was totally puzzled by his answer and it leaves me with only two possibilities. The first one is that he deliberately evaded my question to speak about a totally different matter; or second, that he did not understand the difference between cancer treatment and what goes in a radiology clinic. That's even more scary, coming from the Minister of Health. But in either case, I'm troubled and totally dissatisfied with the answer that was given.

The fact is that Dr Gervais has a staff of 20 nurses and technicians who use state-of-the-art digital X-ray equipment to visually display structural or functional patterns of organs or tissue for diagnostic evaluation.

Because of the desperate shortage of radiologists in southwestern Ontario, Dr Gervais obtained an exemption under the specialist retention initiative to provide services in his community-based Windsor clinic. This year, however, your ministry decided that he no longer qualifies for the exemption and has clawed back the funding for services that the doctor has already been providing. That means he cannot pay his staff, his rent or for his equipment to provide the level of service that patients in our area require.

We are short eight radiologists. It is worse this year than it was last year, when the government said he did qualify. We want to see the names of the radiologists you claimed are practising and we want to see the population figures the government is using.

Is that too much to ask from a government that demands accountability and transparency from others? This information should be made public knowledge. Why is it being kept away from Dr Gervais and indeed the community? Why are you forcing this clinic to close when his services are desperately needed in the community?

The chief of staff of Windsor Western Hospital states in his letter that if the clinic closes, it would be a significant loss to our community. He said it would have an ad-

verse affect on the operation of the hospital's diagnostic imaging department because they do not have the resources to meet the increased demand of consumers. He says further delay will occur and the health care of the citizens of Essex county will be compromised.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons recommends the minimum radiologist-to-patient ratio is 1 to 16,000. To obtain ministry SRI funding exemption status, the ratio is 75% of the recommended minimum, which is 1 to 21,333.

The present population of Essex county is 381,672 plus Kent county's population of 112,897, which adds up to 494,569 people. The full-time radiologists in Essex county are 15, that is, five in each hospital, three at Diagnosticare, Dr Gervais and one in Leamington. In Kent county there are 4.5. That is a total of 19.5 radiologists to serve 494,569 residents. That is a ratio of one to 25,362 people. Your benchmark is 1 to 21,333. Clearly, Dr Gervais qualifies and I demand to see how your ministry could calculate it in any other way. The ministry's physician numbers are totally out of date. All we're asking you is for the proof of your numbers so that we can prove that indeed you are wrong. Why is the ministry so afraid to provide those numbers to Dr Gervais and the community of Windsor-Essex and beyond?

So as I said, I was displeased with the answer from the minister and it really would be a scary thought if he did not understand the difference between cancer treatment, which is what he talked about in his answer to me, and radiology clinics, such as Dr Gervais's. I anxiously await the government's participation in providing these numbers to the questions I've put forward here this afternoon.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr David Christopherson):** The chair now recognizes the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health for a response of up to five minutes.

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** Thank you very much, Speaker, and I also congratulate you on your work in the chair the last few days.

I am, as you mentioned, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, and have been asked by the Minister of Health to respond to the member from Chatham-Kent Essex's question. I'll do that today supported by my colleagues from Durham and Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale.

Each year, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care receives applications to the service retention initiative program, as the member opposite has alluded to. Eligibility criteria are reviewed and approved annually by the Physician Services Committee, which is a joint committee comprised of members of the Ontario Medical Association, which represents doctors, and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. If the SRI program determines that there will be an under-supply of doctors in a certain field in a certain area, they can agree to give relief from the billing cap, an exemption from the threshold of a doctor in that area. The exemption allows the doctor to bill over and above the \$420,000 cap which currently exists, which was increased from \$410,000

from last year as a result of an OMA agreement. By the way, any doctor can bill over and above their \$420,000 cap without an exemption from the SRI program, and they will get paid for every service they do over and above that cap, but just at a lesser amount.

In this case that the member opposite raises, physicians are assessed based on the type of services they provide, the supply of specialists in the county and adjoining counties and the type of sub-specialized services provided. In 1999-2000, the SRI program advised that there were 16 radiologists in Essex county. For the year 2000-01, the SRI program noted that the number of radiologists in Essex county increased to 21. As a result, the SRI program advised that radiologists in Essex county did not meet the geographic undersupply category and therefore did not receive the threshold exemption.

There is, I will let the member opposite know, because I note that he disagrees with the numbers put forward by the specialist retention initiative program, an appeal process, so that if that doctor disagrees with the numbers that the SRI, as I have just mentioned, has put forward and using those numbers has denied an exemption to a billing cap, there is an appeal process which that doctor can follow. Again, I would like to reiterate that any doctor can continue to see patients over and above their \$420,000 billing cap. They do get compensated for those services delivered but at a lesser amount, which is an agreed-upon contract with the Ministry of Health and the OMA.

**The Acting Speaker:** There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House now stands adjourned until 1:30 pm next Monday afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 1811.*

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